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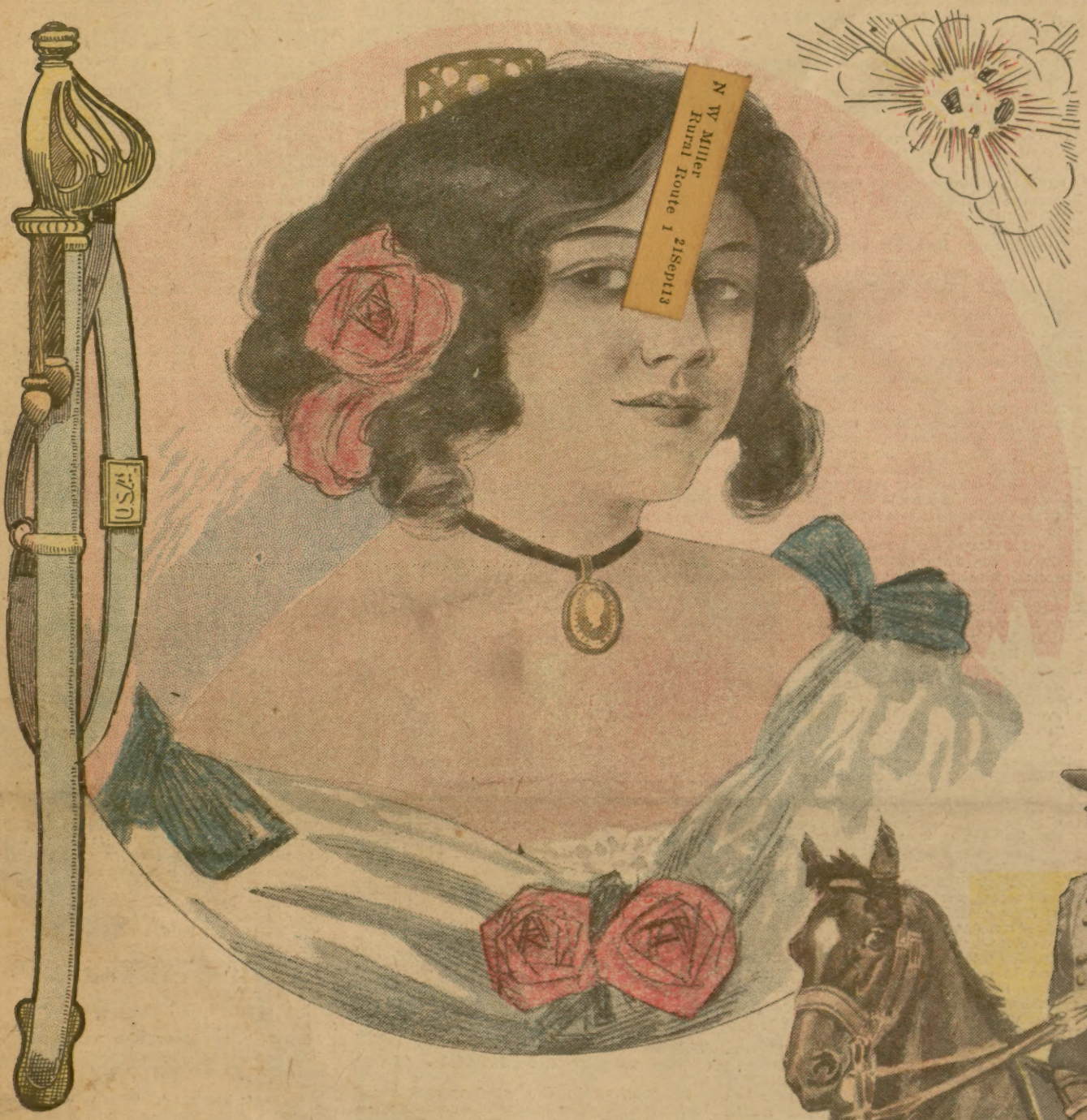

THE CALL TO ARMS

Or, The Testing of Souls

By Emma Howard Wight

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CHAPTER I.

THE CALL.

ON THE lobby of the Taylor Hotel in Winchester, Virginia, hung a number of posters calling upon the men of the South to join the Confederate troops at Harper's Ferry. The posters were signed "Major Jackson."

George Lansdale, a fine-looking man, about forty-five years of age, stopped before one of the posters and read it thoughtfully.

"We are going to have war, sure enough, Lansdale," remarked a typical Southern planter, strolling up to where Lansdale stood. "The men and boys of Winchester and vicinity are responding nobly to that call to arms," he pointed to the poster. "Several regiments have been formed since those bills were posted. We Virginians have got to defend our rights, fight for the South, you know."

George Lansdale did not immediately reply. "Yes," we shall all have to fight," he said, at length.

The planter glanced at him a little sharply. It suddenly occurred to him that George Lansdale was a Northerner. Lansdale had lived so long in the South, twenty years or more, that most persons had forgotten that he was originally from the North. The planter felt rather curious as to whether George Lansdale would array himself with the North or with the South. Lansdale must have read his thoughts, for a slight smile passed over his lips, but he did not make known his intention.

"Who is Major Jackson?" he asked, after a moment.

"He was a professor at the Lexington Military University," explained the planter. As Lansdale slightly lifted his brows, he continued: "There appears to be a great diversity of opinion in regard to him. Some refuse to take him seriously as a soldier; others believe that he has the making of a great commander."

"Well, time will determine one way or the other," remarked George Lansdale, carelessly, as he turned away.

He passed through the lobby, where men stood in groups discussing gravely the vital topic of the day—war between the North and the South, descended the steps leading to the sidewalk, where a colored groom was holding his horse. Lansdale mounted, rode through the town and out upon the turnpike. It was a day in May in the year 1860. The beautiful Shenandoah Valley was at its fairest. The orchards were a mass of exquisite bloom, the wide-stretching meadows were an emerald green sea, with the ever-changing mountains for a background. On that fair May morning they were azure-hued, touched with gold where the sun kissed them. Along the hedges wild roses and honeysuckle bloomed riotously, filling the soft, warm air with perfume.

George Lansdale, buried in deep thought, his brows drawn together in a troubled frown, was oblivious to the beauty of Nature. Though twenty years of his life had been spent in one of the most beautiful spots in Virginia, the South had not become endeared to him, the dreamy, inactive, self-indulgent life of the rich slave-holder had never commended itself to him. In a word, George Lansdale was a disappointed man, who regarded his life as a failure. All that had saved him from becoming an embittered man was his love for his daughter and only child.

As he rode slowly along the turnpike, George Lansdale's thoughts went back twenty years to the summer he had met and fallen in love with Adelaide Cary, a Southern beauty, daughter of a rich Virginia planter. He was twenty-five years of age at that time, talented, ambitious, and just commencing to make his mark in his chosen profession—the law. A friend had prevailed upon him to accompany him to White Sulphur Springs, a summer resort near Winchester. The belle of the Springs was Adelaide Cary. She was very lovely, with dreamy blue eyes, golden hair, and delicate, exquisite coloring. She was slim and willowy, with a long swan-like throat and dazzlingly white arms and shoulders.

The young Northerner fell desperately in love with the young Southern beauty. He appealed to her because he was different from the men to whom she was accustomed. He lacked the dash, the culture, the chivalry peculiar to the Southerner of that day, but he possessed a determination, a strength of will that would not brook defeat. He won the Southern beauty from a host of suitors.

He fancied himself the happiest man in all the world, and for a time he lived in a dream of bliss. Then came the awakening.

Lansdale took his beautiful bride to his home in the North. And it was not long before he began to be disillusioned. Mrs. Lansdale was spoiled, capricious, and utterly selfish. She was also very vain and exacting, and she expected her husband to remain always the devoted lover. She was jealous of the time he gave to his profession. They had been married only a few months when she informed her husband that she detested the North, and that she wished to return to the South to live.

He refused at first to take her seriously. In course of time a daughter was born to them. The young mother was a long time getting back her strength. She fretted constantly for her home. The physician told her husband that the Northern climate did not agree with her. Lansdale compromised by sending her and the baby South for a long visit. He bore the separation with an equanimity that surprised himself. He was beginning to realize that his love for his lovely young wife was dead; that, in fact, he had loved an ideal that existed only in his own imagination.

When the time was approaching for the return of his wife, he received a letter from her informing him that she would never go back to the North. "My doctor says that I shall never be quite as strong as I was before the baby came," she wrote. "I am sure if I return to that cold, horrible North, I shall die. There is but one thing for you to do—come and live in the South."

And so it came to pass that George Lansdale gave up his career, put aside ambition, left his home, and went to live in the South on his father-in-law's plantation. He tried to make the best of it, but he was neither happy nor contented.

At her father's death, which occurred ten years after the marriage, Mrs. Lansdale inherited the plantation and the slaves. George Lansdale's life was practically that of any Southern planter. He never made any complaint nor any reference to his disappointed hopes. A woman less selfish, less self-absorbed, than Mrs. Lansdale would have guessed intuitively that he was not happy. They had but the one child, and a deep affection existed between Lansdale and his daughter. Helen Lansdale idolized her father. He was her ideal of all that was noblest and best in man. Indeed, to his daughter George Lansdale revealed himself as he never had to his wife. That the girl in no manner resembled her mother was a source of secret gratification to Lansdale.

CHAPTER II.

HELEN.

Helen was standing on the porch at Willow Lawn when her father turned in at the gates. She was more striking-looking than strictly beautiful, a dark-haired, dark-eyed, queenly looking girl.

A half-grown negro boy came forward and took Lansdale's horse. He came up the steps to where his daughter was standing. An involuntary look of affection flashed between them. Helen's eyes lingered questioningly upon her father's face. She guessed intuitively that he was troubled.

"You look tired, father," she said, drawing forward a comfortable chair. 'Sit down and rest. Shall I have Samson make you a mint-julep?"

He shook his head as he sat down a little wearily.

"No," he replied, rather abstractedly. He was silent a moment, then he looked up at her as she stood leaning against one of the stone pillars which supported the porch, and said, gravely, "Helen, there is going to be war, the most cruel, the most bitter of all war—civil war."

She nodded her head gravely. "I was afraid it would be so," she declared. "Yes, civil war is cruel, but all war is terrible," and she gave a half-shudder. "I do not think that anything justifies war."

"Perhaps not," said Lansdale, "But when it comes, it's every man's duty to fight for his country."

"Of course," she admitted, readily. "It's the duty of every man to give his life, if need be, in defense of his country. Virginia is calling upon the men of the South to rally to her defense."

"Yes," said Lansdale. "There are posters all over Winchester calling upon the men of the South to join the Confederate troops at Harper's Ferry. And they are responding valiantly." He paused, looking down. She regarded him earnestly, with the questioning look in her eyes. Suddenly he looked up at her and his eyes were appealing. "Helen, is there anything which would cause you to love me less?" he asked.

She smiled, "No, father," she replied. "I shall always love you," she paused just an instant, "better than anything else in all the world."

Something like a sigh of relief left his lips. He knew he could place implicit faith in what she said. She inherited nothing of her mother's capriciousness and instability.

"A man must fight for his country, for the land of his birth," said Lansdale. "My country is the North."

There was a moment's silence. The girl had paled a little, but she spoke very quietly. "If you believe it to be your duty to fight for the North, father, of course you must do it," she said.

"I could not fight against the North," he declared. She bowed her head understandingly. "And to remain inactive is to be branded as a coward." He arose, took her hand in his, and looked at her with great earnestness. "My child, there is one thing that gives me great concern in this matter."

"What is that, father?"

"The fear of causing you pain. You have reassured me in regard to any change in your affection."

"I love the South." She looked away from him toward the azure, gold-stained mountains. "But," her eyes returned lovingly to his troubled face, "I love you more." She clung to him suddenly. "Oh, I don't know what I shall do without you!"

He drew her to him with great tenderness and kissed her. "It will be hard, I know," he said.

"You have been all the world to me, father," she murmured, with unconscious pathos that brought a pang to his heart. He knew what she had missed in her life, the sweetness and unselfishness of a mother's love.

"I wonder how mother will regard your joining the Northern Army, father?" Helen said, in a troubled voice.

"She will oppose it, of course," replied Lansdale, with a touch of weariness. "But she must be told," he added, with a suppressed sigh.

They passed into the house.

CHAPTER III.

"YOU ARE A RENEGADE!"

Upon a couch, in the midst of soft, silken pillows, in a daintily furnished room, reclined Mrs. Lansdale, a faded, petulant woman. She wore a white gown trimmed with costly lace, the loose sleeves of which fell away from the thin, marble-white arms. She had an exquisite, aristocratic-looking hand, the slim fingers glittering with diamonds.

Beside the couch, in her hand a cut glass flask of perfume with which she had been bathing her mistress' forehead, stood a handsome mulatto woman. There was magnetism in the light touch of her slim yellow fingers, and Mrs. Lansdale lay with closed eyes half sleeping. The mulatto woman's lustrous, dusky eyes lingered tenderly on her mistress' face. She was several years older than Mrs. Lansdale, but looked younger. There was a touch of red color on her smooth cheek, her skin was unwrinkled. She was tall and erect in figure, and her black hair was crisp and curly.

Mrs. Lansdale stirred and languidly opened her eyes. "Has Mr. Lansdale returned, Rosine?" she asked.

"Ya'as, mistis, I seen him ride up to de po'ch nigh on to harf-hour ago," replied Rosine.

"Why doesn't he come in here?" exclaimed Mrs. Lansdale, petulantly. "I want to know the news from Winchester."

"Mistis, am it true dat de niggers am gwine to be set free?" queried Rosine.

Mrs. Lansdale frowned. "Certainly not," she replied sharply. "Who has been putting such ideas as that into your head?"

"Samson done heahed it de las' time he druv de massa to Winchester," Rosine explained. "He sade de folks up Norf war gwine to set de niggers free."

"The idea!" exclaimed Mrs. Lansdale, contemptuously.

"Is dat what they gwine to fight 'bout?" asked Rosine, curiously.

Mrs. Lansdale gave her a keen glance. "You appear to take a great interest in the matter. Do you want to be free?"

"No," Rosine dropped on her knees beside the couch. "I don't keer nuffin 'bout freedom. All I wants is to be wid you till I dies." She bent her dark head and kissed Mrs. Lansdale's white, jeweled hand. "You knows I love you mo'n anything else in all dis worl'."

A strange look stole over Mrs. Lansdale's face as she touched caressingly the dark, graceful head of the mulatto woman.

"Such love as yours, Rosine, unselfish, undiscriminating, generous, is the best kind of love, after all," she murmured. "No one has ever loved me just like that save you."

Her father had given Rosine to her on her birthday, when she was twelve years of age. The negro child became devotedly attached to her beautiful, imperious young mistress, in spite of the fact that she was not always kind to her. Once, when she was fifteen years of age, her young mistress in a fit of rage struck her across the shoulders with her riding whip. The slave girl winced under the blow, which raised a livid welt across her bare shoulders, but no sound left her lips, not so much as a breath of pain. The next moment the spoiled Southern girl burst into tears. She tossed the whip aside and threw her arms around Rosine's neck.

"Forgive me, Rosine, please forgive me!" she sobbed.

"Don't cry, young mistis!" pleaded Rosine. "I kyant ba'r fo' to see you fret-tin'."

"The love that pardons all," added Mrs. Lansdale, remembering that day.

"A good many ob dem niggers got a pow'ful hankerin' arter freedom," said Rosine, as she arose from her knees.

Mrs. Lansdale's lips tightened. "There shall be no more tales of that kind brought to the quarters," she declared, her eyes narrowing.

At that moment Lansdale and Helen entered the room.

"George, I want you to give orders to have Sampson whipped," said Mrs. Lansdale, addressing her husband.

"Oh, no, mother!" exclaimed Helen, in a shocked voice.

Lansdale looked at Rosine who stood with lowered eyes beside her mistress' couch. He had never been able to feel as the Southerners did in regard to discussing family matters or anything of importance in the presence of the slaves. He knew that Mrs. Lansdale confided her private affairs to Rosine, talked to her without reserve, and the fact was repugnant to him.

"Leave the room, Rosine," he said, quietly.

The mulatto woman turned and went out sullenly. In her heart she hated her mistress' husband. She could see no fault in Mrs. Lansdale, and she blamed him for the lack of harmony and love that existed.

Lansdale waited until the door had closed upon Rosine, to the further irritation of Mrs. Lansdale, then he turned to his wife.

"What has Samson done?" he queried.

"He has been circulating it among the negroes that they are to be set free," she replied.

A faint smile passed over Lansdale's lips.

"You want to have him whipped for that?"

"Yes, I do. I will not have tales of that kind brought to the negroes. The very idea is preposterous, of course, but I will not have them discussing it, speculating about it."

"I do not think you will be able to stop them doing that."

"I shall make an example of Samson. Will you give the order?"

"No," quietly replied Lansdale. "I will not."

He walked to the window and stood looking out. The beautiful grounds were a mass of bloom; roses, lilacs and orange blossoms filled the air with fragrance. George Lansdale was blind to the beauty upon which his eyes rested unseeingly. A great weariness was upon him. He stood bracing himself for the ordeal which he must face.

"Mother," said Helen, very firmly, "you must not have Samson whipped. It would be cruel, unjust."

Mrs. Lansdale shrugged her shoulders petulantly. "It seems I am not at liberty to do as I please with my own slaves," she exclaimed.

"You would be very sorry yourself, mother, if you did such a thing as that," said Helen, gently.

"The North will soon learn that the South is not to be trampled upon, and then there will be an end of this war business," declared Mrs. Lansdale.

"A great many Southern people are of that opinion, but it is a delusion," said George Lansdale. "There is going to be war and a lengthy one, I am afraid."

Mrs. Lansdale's eyes widened with a look of fear. "It is dreadful to think of," she murmured.

Lansdale turned from the window and slowly approached the couch. Helen gave him a quick, sympathetic glance. Lansdale came at once to the point.

"Adelaide, I am going to join the Northern Army," he said.

She stared at him incredulously. "What?" she cried.

He repeated what he had said.

"Do you mean that you are going to fight against the South?" she asked.

"That follows, of course," he replied.

She grew very white. "You are a renegade!" she cried, passionately.

"I am not a renegade," he declared, wearily. "The North is my country. You seem to forget that."

"George," she lifted herself upon the couch, holding out her hand to him pleadingly, "join the Southern Army. Fight for the land from which you chose a wife, that has been your home for twenty years. Ah, you could not fight for a dearer, fairer land!"

"That is true," he admitted. "But it is my duty to fight for the North."

"Duty!" she cried. "Virginia is my country. Your first duty is to me, your wife."

"A man's duty to his wife does not include the sacrifice of his honor, his principles," he said, quietly.

She lay back among her pillows and looked at him with sudden calmness. "You are determined upon this step?" she queried. "There is nothing that will change your purpose?"

"Nothing," he replied. "I am sorry to cause you pain," he continued, more gently. "I wish it were possible for me to do as you wish—fight for the South, for Virginia—but it isn't."

There was a moment's silence; it seemed very long to Helen. Then Mrs. Lansdale spoke.

"From the day you array yourself against the South, you and I are strangers," she said.

"Mother!" cried Helen, entreatingly.

Mrs. Lansdale continued unheedingly: "I think that I shall learn to hate you. I never wish to look upon your face again."

Lansdale bowed. His face had grown rather pale.

"So be it," he said, and moved toward the door.

Helen, with a passionately reproachful glance at her mother, turned and followed her father. He stopped, took her in his arms, and kissed her very tenderly.

"Good-by, my dear," he murmured.

"No, no, father, I am going with you!" she cried. "I am going where I can be near you."

He shook his head. "No, your place is here with your mother," he replied.

He gently unclasped her clinging arms and went out. Helen dropped into a chair and burst into tears. Mrs. Lansdale lay motionless, staring straight before her.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SKIRMISH.

It was the fall of 1861. The Confederates were encamped about Winchester. General Jackson, in command, had his headquarters in the Taylor Hotel. On the morning of a day in October he was seated in a room on the first floor of the hotel, listening attentively to the report of one of his scouts. He gave a slight approving nod of the head as the scout finished.

"Send Major Thornton to me," he said.

The scout saluted and withdrew. General Jackson arose and walked to the window. There was nothing imposing or soldierly in his appearance or bearing. His grave, thoughtful face had more the look of a student than of a soldier. His eyes were gentle and mild.

The window commanded a view of a part of the town encircled by the white tents of the Confederates; beyond were undulating fields and meadows encompassed by the everlasting hills, ablaze with the russet and gold and scarlet of autumn.

"How beautiful are the immutable hills!" murmured the Confederate commander. An enrapt look stole over his face, the dark-bearded lips moved silently.

The door opened, and a tall, handsome young officer entered. General Jackson turned slowly. The young officer saluted.

"You sent for me, General?"

"Yes," approaching him. "I have heard

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from one of my scouts that a Federal regiment is encamped on the banks of Opequon Creek. This regiment is under the command of Colonel Lansdale, a brave, intrepid, and efficient officer. I want you to take a detachment of men and make an attack upon the Federal encampment."

"When, General?"

General Jackson reflected an instant.

"Today," he replied.

Major Thornton saluted and retired.

An hour later, with the number of men he thought sufficient to make the attack, he marched through Winchester to the Berryville turnpike. A mile further along they struck Opequon Creek and came in sight of the Federal encampment. Major Thornton saw at once that he had rather underestimated the forces of the enemy, also that they held a strong position, making an attack upon them a somewhat formidable undertaking.

He thought rapidly, and decided that the only thing to do was to make a dash upon the Federals before they had time to prepare for the attack. He acted upon this quick decision, and charged the enemy. The Confederates at first had the advantage, but Major Thornton very soon had cause to remember General Jackson's words in regard to the officer in command of the Federals. He rallied his men with amazing dexterity and promptness. The Federals not only made a successful resistance, but soon began to gain the advantage. Their commander, a striking and conspicuous figure on an iron-gray horse, rode hither and thither among the troops, giving quick, crisp orders, encouraging the men, urging them on. His effect upon the troops was wonderful; they fought as though inspired.

The struggle was fierce while it lasted, but it was brief. The Federals pressed the Confederates until they began to retreat. Major Thornton tried in vain to rally his men. Defeat was inevitable. The Confederates turned and fled, pursued by the Federals. Major Thornton held his ground as long as possible, but finally had to follow in the wake of the Confederates. He had gone a little distance when he looked back.

In advance of the pursuing Federals rode the commander. Smarting under his defeat, Major Thornton felt a sudden impulse of rage, and acted upon it almost without volition of his own. He wheeled and rode back toward the Federal officer, lifted his pistol, and fired.

Colonel Lansdale swayed from side to side, then toppled from his saddle to the ground. The Federals, who had seen their commander fall, wavered for a moment, then dashed on in pursuit of the Confederates. The iron-gray horse alone remained beside the still form on the turnpike.

After a little while a powerfully built, ebon-hued darky crept from behind a thick growth of bushes beside the turnpike. He stood for a moment looking cautiously up and down the turnpike, then went and knelt beside Colonel Lansdale. The upturned face was white and still; from a wound in the breast the blood was flowing.

"Oh, Lawd! de massa am dade!" moaned the negro.

The Confederate officer's aim had been true. Colonel Lansdale was shot through the heart.

CHAPTER V.

REMORSE.

Up and down the room, her face as colorless as her flowing white draperies, paced Mrs. Lansdale, the intense nervous agitation under which she labored lending her a fictitious strength. Rosine stood watching her with troubled eyes.

"Mistis, don't take on dat a-way," she pleaded.

"I cannot help it, Rosine," moaned Mrs. Lansdale. "The sound of that fighting drives me mad." A shudder shook her from head to foot at the sound of a fresh burst of artillery.

Just then Helen entered the room. She looked at her mother in surprise.

"Why, mother, what is the matter?" she asked.

"De mistis allers takes on dis a-way when thar's fightin' gwine on," explained Rosine.

"Don't, mother! You will make yourself ill," said Helen. "Do try to calm yourself."

"I cannot be calm when I know they are fighting a battle," exclaimed Mrs. Lansdale.

"I do not think it is a battle," declared Helen. "It sounds more like a skirmish, and no doubt will soon be over. Please sit down, mother. You will wear yourself out."

"Let me alone!" cried Mrs. Lansdale. "What does it matter to you how I suffer? You never cared for me. You loved only your father."

Helen drew back, and a pained flush rose in her cheeks. "Oh, mother!" she murmured.

"It is true, you know it is true!" declared Mrs. Lansdale.

"How have I failed in my duty, mother?"

"Duty?" a bitter laugh left Mrs. Lansdale's lips. "Oh, yes, you have done your duty! You have been a model daughter in that regard." She dropped into a chair from sheer exhaustion. "Go away," she murmured, wearily. "Go away and leave me with Rosine."

Helen turned very sadly and went silently from the room. Rosine knelt down beside her mistress.

"I wouldn't hab sade dat to Miss Helen, honey," she said. "You make her feel mighty bad. And ob co'se Miss Helen loves you," she went on, consolingly. "I don't know how you eber got dat idee in yo' hade."

Mrs. Lansdale's fair head sank wearily on the mulatto woman's shoulder.

"Nobody has ever loved me as you do, Rosine," she murmured.

Rosine put her arms tenderly about the frail form.

"De good Lawd knows, honey, dat po' Rosine loves you mo'n she loves her life," she murmured, with passionate tenderness.

There was silence for some moments. The firing was dying away. It ceased altogether for a little while, then one single shot rang out. Mrs. Lansdale sat up, trembling and quivering.

"Rosine," she whispered, with pale lips, pressing her hand to her heart, "that shot seemed to pierce my very heart."

She sank back half-fainting into Rosine's arms. Rosine chafed her hands, and in a few moments she revived. The large blue eyes opened and looked at Rosine full of a strange fear. She clung to her, trembling.

"Come 'long, mistis, and lay down. I'se gwine to guv you a soothin' powder," said Rosine.

"No leave me, Rosine! I am afraid, afraid!" murmured Mrs. Lansdale. "Listen, I will tell you why I suffer so when I know there is fighting. It is because I fear that my husband may be there. I picture him lying on the battlefield wounded, perhaps, dead. Oh, God!"

She covered her face with her hands as though to shut out some dread sight. Rosine looked at her with a great pitying tenderness. After a moment Mrs. Lansdale's hands dropped, and she looked at Rosine with eyes so full of pain that the mulatto woman's heart ached for her.

"I think I went mad that day for a while when he told me he intended joining the Northern Army," continued Mrs. Lansdale. "The South is so dear to me. It maddened me to know that my husband was among the first to take up arms against her. I said cruel, cruel things to him. But since that day I have never known a moment's peace. I have suffered, oh, Heaven! how I have suffered. If I could only see him and ask him to forgive me. I think I would then be at peace."

"Nebber mind, honey. De massa, he come back some day," murmured Rosine, comfortingly.

* * * * *

Helen had gone slowly down the stairs and out on the porch. There she stood leaning against one of the pillars, gazing straight before her with a look of pain in her eyes. Her mother's accusation had hurt her the more because she knew that it was not without truth. She had been standing there for some little time when Rosine came out of the house.

"Young mistis," she said, approaching Helen, "de mistis am breakin' her heart 'bout de massa."

Helen started and looked at her quickly. "What do you mean, Rosine?" she asked.

Rosine related the conversation that had taken place between her mistress and herself. Helen listened wonderingly.

"I never dreamed she felt that way," she declared. "Poor mother! How she must suffer!"

"I wish de massa would come home," said Rosine.

At that moment Samson came in at the gate and up to the porch steps. There he stopped and looked at Helen.

"De massa am dade, young mistis," he said.

This thrilling story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these colmuns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you to send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

CLAUDIA'S FAST.

Craig Huntley sprinted through the gate and caught up to the out-pulling

Then he toppled from his saddle.

train. As he entered the Pullman car, breathless from his speed efforts, his composure was not restored by the sight of a young woman irreproachably groomed and gowned who occupied the section opposite the one assigned to him.

She was apparently absorbed in a novel, but Craig with the sure intuition of a man in love knew that she had witnessed his entrance.

The inevitable first quarrel of lovers had occurred between Claudia Wayne and himself exactly sixty-seven hours ago, and the adamant attitude she had since assumed and her refusal to listen to explanations had caused him to find solace in a business trip. He hadn't the slightest idea that she, too, contemplated a journey.

It was an awkward contretemps for him, and he contemplated changing his section. A second covert glance so convinced him of her insouciance that he decided to be as defiant as she was.

After settling himself and his belongings comfortably, he began to take inventory of the other occupants of the car. A lackadaisical young matron with her child, a boy of two, a heedless young nursemaid, and two traveling men comprised the list.

"First call for dinner," suddenly bawled a white-coated waiter.

Every one but Claudia responded to the call, and Craig concluded she was waiting until he should have dined. After an uncomfortable meal, he sought the smoker.

By the time he had returned to his section, the last call was echoing through the car, but Claudia made no move. Fearing absorption in her book had precluded notice of the call, Craig called the porter and bade him remind her that the diner would soon leave the train.

"I don't wish to dine, thank you," she replied to the porter's solicitous suggestion.

Two or three hours later, Craig noticed with concern that she looked wan and pale.

"Women never know when nor how to eat," he thought impatiently.

By this time Claudia and the young matron, through the agency of the child had become acquainted, and this gave Craig an inspiration. At the next station he found an attractive fruit display.

He purchased a basket of peaches and pears which he offered to the young matron. She accepted it with appreciative enthusiasm and immediately offered to share it with Claudia. A warm wave of color passed over the girl's face, as she coldly refused the fruit and ostentatiously returned to her perusal of the book. He was chagrined to feel that her sole reason for refusing it was because he had purchased it.

Presently a diner was again attached and the welcome first call of supper sounded. The young matron went forward, admonishing the nursemaid to guard the child who was sleeping peacefully on a pillow. Claudia still remained in her seat, watching wistfully the nursemaid, who was fortifying herself by means of the fruit and a box of luncheon.

As Claudia passed her to get some water, the maid extended the box.

"Have a sandwich," she urged, "and some fruit."

Claudia hesitated, eyed the box longingly, and then took a sandwich.

"Thank you. I don't care for any fruit, however."

She ate with such apparent relish that Craig gave up his idea that she was fasting. He got off at the next stop for a moment, and when he re-entered the Pullman he did so by the rear door, occuping the section behind the nursemaid and child. Claudia was apparently asleep.

At the next station the nursemaid asked him if he would mind keeping an eye on the child as she wanted to get off to speak to some friends. This he promised to do, but when the train again pulled out the nurse did not reappear.

In a few moments there was a terrible jolt, a swaying, a crash, and then the train was stationary. Claudia, who had been thrown to the floor by the shock, got up and looked around. Craig was standing holding the boy aloft.

"Were you hurt, Claudia?" he asked anxiously.

"No—the baby?"

"He didn't even awaken," he replied depositing the child on the seat. "Will you look after him while I go to see what was the matter?"

He returned in a few moments.

"No one hurt," he reassured her. "We ran into something. But the nurse is left behind. She got off to see some friends and failed to connect. That fact and the shock sustained from the accident proved too much for the child's mother. She has quite collapsed. The diner got a worse jolt than we did."

"Then," she remarked reflectively, "it wasn't such a misfortune after all, that I couldn't go into the diner."

"Claudia," he began impetuously, but the entrance of the young matron, looking white and ill, precluded further explanation. Claudia went to her assistance and helped her to bed in the stateroom, while Craig devoted himself to the child. In half an hour Claudia returned.

"She is asleep. I told her I—you—we—would look after Bobby."

"I shall need your help. He seems cross."

"I should think he would be. He has had nothing to eat since noon!"

"You have been longer than that without food," he remarked significantly.

"And I, too—have been—cross," she admitted.

"Shall we take Bobby into the diner?" he asked.

"Yes, thank you, Craig. And—I am sorry."

"We will make it past history, dear. Let us go into the diner and forget it all."

He ordered everything tempting on the menu for Claudia and himself, while Bobby contentedly ate a cereal and milk.

"Will you tell me," demanded Craig, "why you did not dine?"

She smiled archly.

"You thought I was fasting from—a broken heart? To be candid, as soon as I was aboard I discovered I had left my purse at home. My ticket and reservation were in my valise, but I haven't a cent of money. I reach my destination in the morning and I had expected to fast until then."

"And you wouldn't take even the fruit because I had bought it! If it hadn't been for anxiety as to Bobby's fate you wouldn't have relented when the accident occurred."

She met his reproachful eyes bravely.

"I didn't know you had Bobby," she confessed, "until I had turned to—come to you."

The Poisoned Pin

Or, *An Enemy to Napoleon* :-: By Hamilton Blake

"Who are you?

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CHAPTER XIII.

A SINGULAR INTERVIEW.

MY DEAR, I have sent for you because something I cannot describe seems to draw us together. Are you happy, mademoiselle?"

Vivenne looked into the face of the Countess Annette in whose rich parlor she sat the day after the tragedy at the bal masque at the DuVilliers mansion. She had received an invitation to the establishment of this beautiful woman, and had been conveyed thither in her sumptuous carriage behind the four white Arab steeds which had for some time been the envy and admiration of all Paris.

"I am happy," answered Vivenne, yet at the same time a shadow seemed to take away some of the light of her eyes. "One perhaps should not say this, for I fear there are few lives without a shadow."

Annette smiled faintly and for a moment looked away. Presently she spoke.

"You were annoyed the other night at the Cafe Cyrene?"

"Yes, your highness, I was annoyed. I did not accompany Feroc St. Hillaire thither of my own free will."

"I thought so. I noticed that you were annoyed."

"I despise the man," went on Vivenne, with rising spirit. "It was not the first time he had intruded upon me."

"As a lover?" asked Annette.

"As much a lover as a man of his passions can be," was the reply.

"But you have a lover who is ever welcome?"

A crimson flush overspread Vivenne's face.

"I have a lover, Countess," she confessed. "I love Laurent St. Denis."

"And he is worthy of your affection, mademoiselle. You may have heard the prevailing gossip. The rivals have met."

"I heard it all from Laurent's own lips. St. Hillaire sought him in the privacy of his own apartments and got run through by a rapier."

"Which is worse than being struck by a bottle of wine," laughed Annette, showing her pretty teeth.

"Infinitely worse," returned Vivenne. "If St. Hillaire recovers——"

"Oh, he will recover," broke in the Countess. "It is hard to kill a lion."

"They will meet again." A pallor of fear seemed to drive color from Vivenne's cheeks.

"If St. Hillaire does not conclude that he has found his master with the blades. St. Hillaire is one of those human hyenas who will take advantage of his enemy. I am surprised at his boldness in meeting St. Denis on an equality. He must have fortified himself with drink."

"I can well believe that."

"He has offered you no indignity since the cafe incident?"

"I have not seen him since."

"Just now he is nursing his wound and meditating revenge. An inch farther to the left, and St. Hillaire would have been put out of commission."

"I don't think Laurent wanted to take the rascal's life."

"Perhaps not. It is no credit to have the blood of a bravo on genteel hands."

A moment's silence followed.

"What is Paris talking about now?" suddenly asked the Countess, leaning back in her satin chair.

"What but about the tragedy at the bal masque?"

"It is excellent food for the hungry," Annette went on. "What have the authorities done?"

"Laurent tells me that Fouche has had a stormy interview with the Emperor, who gave him three days in which to produce the wielder of the poisoned pin or lose his head."

"Poor Fouche!" exclaimed the Countess, in tones of derision. "He may have a difficult task before him."

"So Laurent thinks. The Emperor, according to report, was the Duchess' friend."

"She was quite near to him," observed Annette. "She had taken the place of the Marquise de Bricourt. There must have been a scene at the bal masque?"

"A startling scene," said Vivenne. "I heard that the doors were closed immediately after the tragedy. But were you not there, your highness?"

"I was one of the guests," said Annette. "Strange that I should question you for particulars when I myself was present. The dancers were thunderstruck. The Duchess had the Marquis de Noilles when she was taken ill."

"So I have been informed." Vivenne paused a moment. "Is it possible that one of the guests committed the deed?" she suddenly resumed. "It is said that the Duchess had the palace guarded against a mysterious woman in black, who is suspected by the police of being the owner of the poisoned pin."

"I have been told as much," was the reply. "I did not notice any such person at the palace Du Villiers."

"No? One so garbed would have been instantly noticed among the guests of the Duchess."

"Yes."

"Was the Empress much concerned?"

"Her majesty was the coolest person in the ballroom," returned the Countess.

"She is sometimes given to nerves, I hear."

"But that night she carried herself like an empress. Poor woman!"

Vivenne looked at the Countess to see if the sigh was real.

"If one can believe all the floating rumors and the accounts in the journals, the Emperor is to be the next victim of the pin."

"I wonder, my dear, how such a report can get out?"

"The merest rumor, perhaps, but both Colonel D'Ancre and the Marquise de Bricourt were close to the Emperor, and now Desiree, another favorite, is stricken."

There was a little movement on the Countess' part.

"My dear," said she, leaning toward Vivenne, "emperors have foes as well as those who never aspire to thrones. Rulers are not always just. They have iron heels and hesitate not to use them."

"But," said Vivenne, quickly, "if the Emperor has wronged the wielder of the poisoned pin, why does not that person strike him direct, and not deprive him first of his friends."

"You mean that even in a case of revenge there is no use taking two bites at a cherry?" smiled Annette.

"Three bites in this instance," Vivenne added.

The deep eyes before her shone like sparkling diamonds. Vivenne recalled the little encounter at the fountain in the park, when she came suddenly upon the woman in black. In thinking of that incident now she almost forgot where she was. The voice of Annette called her back to the present.

"You were saying, Countess, that rulers have iron heels. Their hands are not always gloved."

"You never used truer words, my child!" exclaimed Annette. "I have heard much of the Emperor's acts. Once during the invasion of Poland, he was quartered at Warsaw. In that old city there was a family which for years had belonged to the nobility. It consisted of husband, wife, and three children. Old Palewski had the blood of princes in his veins. He loved his family as only a good man can. His days and nights were spent in doing good. When the French came he received them with open arms, because he believed they were going to free Poland from the clutches of the crowned vultures of Europe. He threw open his house to the Emperor's marshals. What happened? His family was insulted, his wife treated as a common servant, his three children cursed by the officers, and when Marco Palewski remonstrated with Napoleon, he was arrested, dragged to a dungeon, and left to die there—which he did. In a few days his good wife and the mother of his children followed him to the grave, killed by the iron hand of the Emperor of the French as surely as though she had been hanged. My dear child, I am telling you this story to illustrate that rulers can be lions when they should be lambs. Do you not believe that even emperors can have a nemesis?—that vengeance, guided by high Heaven, is ordained to give measure for measure until the debt is paid?"

"I know the Emperor has been severe at times," answered Vivenne, when she recovered from this startling narration. "Did he order the incarceration of old Palewski?"

"He did," said the Countess, in severe tones. "When he should have been merciful he was a tryant. Do you not believe, my dear, that there stand today at the Judgment Bar of Heaven Marco Palewski and his good wife Sophia, demanding justice for their deaths? And the children orphaned by the hand of Napoleon—but this is too dark a tale for your delicate ears. I will not continue."

Annette paused abruptly and averted her face.

"You have interested me, Countess," said Vivenne. "What became of the Palewski children?"

"What could become of them but exile?" was the answer. "There were three, Natalie, Moroc, and Marka. Marka was the baby of the family, a wee mite as beautiful as a sunbeam. Moroc was the boy of the family, the delight of his parents, and Natalie became the little mother after the blow. But let us forget such things—if we can. I have kept you too long from your dear Laurent. I hope you will be happy when you are wedded. I wish you all the love and gladness and goodness that come from a union of true hearts. You will see more sunshine than Natalie, Moroc, and little Marka can ever know. Now go and embrace your Laurent. He is quite able to take care of himself when opposed by such men as Feroc St. Hillaire. My door is ever open to you, dear child. In Countess Annette you will always have a friend. I once saw a picture of little Marka, and you have her eyes for all the world. God bless you, sweet child!"

Countess Annette threw her arms around Vivenne, and covered her face with burning kisses. She led her from the room and down the marble steps to the pave where the carriage waited. As Vivenne rode away among the soft cushions she looked back at the stately figure now on the topmost step of the flight.

"Merciful God!" she exclaimed. "Is that the woman who just kissed me?" She turned her head and the carriage rattled away.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE HAND OF STEEL.

The third stroke of the secret instrument of death sent a horror through all Paris. Few knew what was occurring within the cabinet of Napoleon, but it was evident that all was not cheering there. The prophecy of Madame Vespera, the soothsayer, must have come back to the Emperor on the wings of lightning accompanied by clouds of blackness. Had he fallen from his lofty state to become a hunted wolf, with not only the armies of Europe closing in about him, but sought by a foe who eluded the clutches of his secret police?

He raged till he was white and almost exhausted. Back and forth in his cabinet he paced the floor with his hands behind him and his chin on his bosom. He was no longer the well-dressed ruler, and his attire was a matter of comment. He repulsed the closest members of the imperial household, refused to see his Empress, and Marie Louise had to retire without an audience.

At this moment he was suddenly cheered by tidings that sent a thrill of pleasure through his overstrained nerves. An arrest had been made.

Fouche, with his official head at stake, had informed him that a woman had been apprehended, and that she answered the description of the one suspected.

"Who is she?" demanded Napoleon, turning upon his chief of police with the mien of a lion.

"She calls herself Julie Leclerc."

"Her rank?"

"Rank she seems to have none, Sire."

"What! a sans culotte?" fiercely hissed the Emperor.

"Not exactly that. She seems a creature of the middle class, Sire."

"Where is she?"

"At the Abbaye Prison."

"I would see this woman. Bring her to me by the secret corridor. You know the panel yonder?"

Fouche retired with a bow, and once more Napoleon resumed his pacings.

"A woman of the middle class?" he reflected, in audible tones. "I cannot believe that such a person is the wielder of the poisoned pin. But I will see."

Half an hour later a secret door opened, and when the Emperor turned his head he was confronted by Fouche, who led a young woman forward. Napoleon instantly transfixed her with his piercing eyes. She was quite pretty and a woman of three and twenty with a certain look which did not proclaim her a criminal.

"You may retire, Monsieur le Minister," the Emperor said to Fouche with a gesture of dismissal. "I will catechize this woman myself."

Fouche slipped away and left the two alone. Napoleon waved the young woman to an armchair in which she seated herself. He looked her over from head to foot before he spoke.

"Why do you hate me, mademoiselle?" he suddenly began, in kindly tones which showed that he was suppressing his real self.

"I do not, your majesty."

"But you have been arrested by my police charged with the gravest of crimes."

"That is true."

The woman had a clear, resonant voice. She was not abashed in the august presence of the man of destiny.

"Are you really Julie Leclerc?" asked Napoleon, in doubtful tones.

"Such is the name my parents gave me."

"Where do they live?"

"My parents are dead, Sire. I reside in the Rue de la Republic."

"Alone?"

"My little brother Andre is my sole companion."

"What do you do for a living?"

"I sell flowers at night in the parks."

"But you are charged with doing more than selling flowers," said the Emperor, with rising emotion.

"I know I am."

"Let me see the pin," and Napoleon reached forth a hand, while he regarded the woman with a sinister look.

"The pin, Sire?"

"Yes, the deadly thing which has stricken down my friends. Of course, you have it concealed on your person."

Julie Leclerc suddenly rose to her feet and stretched out her hands.

"A thousand pardons, Sire. I have deceived your police from love of my Emperor."

"What? A trick?"

"Yes, your majesty."

Napoleon recoiled as if he were about to be struck by the fangs of a serpent.

"Beware how you deceive me!" he cried, his face white once more, but this time with passion. "I will not be trifled with. You have played deception, you say?"

"Yes, for the purpose of being admitted to your cabinet."

"For what reason?"

"To tell the truth."

The Emperor was puzzled. He looked long at the person before hm and then made a gesturé of annoyance.

"I cannot be kept from my duties in this manner," said he. "What is the information you profess to have?"

"I can tell you, Sire, who knows all about the person who really wields the poisoned pin."

"You?"

"Yes, Sire."

"You are not playing another trick now?"

"As I hope for pardon in a better world than this!" asseverated the one addressed, "my lips are not deceiving you now, Sire."

Napoleon drew toward him a sheet of paper and picked up a pen.

"Tell me," said he, turning once more to Julie Leclerc. "Is it a conspiracy?"

"I cannot say."

"Who is the person whom you are willing to hand over to justice?"

"It is one Laurent St. Denis."

The quick start occasioned by this revealment told that the Emperor was totally unprepared for the information.

CUBS' FOOD

They Thrive on Grape-Nuts.

Healthy babies don't cry and the well-nourished baby that is fed on Grape-Nuts is never a crying baby. Many babies who cannot take any other food relish the perfect food, Grape-Nuts, and get well.

"My baby was given up by three doctors who said that the condensed milk on which I had fed her had ruined the child's stomach. One of the doctors told me that the only thing to do would be to try Grape-Nuts, so I got some and prepared it as follows: I soaked 1½ tablespoonfuls in one pint of cold water for half an hour, then I strained off the liquid and mixed 12 teaspoonfuls of this strained Grape-Nuts juice with six teaspoonfuls of rich milk, put in a pinch of salt and a little sugar, warmed it and gave it to baby every two hours.

"In this simple, easy way I saved baby's life and have built her up to a strong, healthy child, rosy and laughing. The food must certainly be perfect to have such a wonderful effect as this. I can truthfully say I think it is the best food in the world to raise delicate babies on and is also a delicious healthful food for grown-ups as we have discovered in our family."

Grape-Nuts is equally valuable to the strong, healthy man or woman. It stands for the true theory of health. "There's a reason," and it is explained in the little book, "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs.

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.

"What?" he exclaimed, "Laurent St. Denis?"

"Yes, Sire."

"What proof have you, woman?"

"The proof of my own eyes," was the reply. "Last night he met this woman in black under the trees in the Champs Elysees. I was not far away and was totally unperceived. I was so near, though, that I could overhear their conversation. It interested me from the first. The woman was veiled, but Laurent St. Denis knew her on sight. I heard her laugh over the three tragedies of the poisoned pin, and she drew from her sleeve a little instrument of steel which she exhibited to St. Denis. I was thrilled, your majesty, as I have never been thrilled before. I saw Laurent St. Denis examine the instrument and hand it back to the woman. He chuckled as he did so, and presently they slipped away."

"And you?"

The voice of Napoleon was strident with anger.

"I followed the pair till they separated."

"And then——"

"I kept after St. Denis to make sure that I had not been deceived."

"And you were not deceived?"

"I saw him enter the grounds that surround his residence by a private way."

"Will you sign your statement?" exclaimed Napoleon, turning to the table again.

"Gladly, your majesty."

Julie Leclerc advanced till she halted at the table at which the Emperor was now writing rapidly.

"Here, your name!" he said, looking up as he pushed a sheet of paper toward her and extended the pen. "You must stand or fall by your evidence."

She sat down and scrawled her name at the bottom of the page, then rose and awaited his further commands.

"You can go now, but remember that you may be asked to confirm your story later on. You will be under surveillance, and woe to you, woman, if you have lied to your Emperor!"

Napoleon crossed the room and opened a door beyond which he knew that the Black Adder was waiting. Fouche appeared.

"You will keep Mademoiselle Leclerc in view," said the Emperor. "See that she is not interfered with by the friends of the persons whose name she has revealed to me."

A low bow on the part of the minister of police told that the command was understood. Julie Leclerc was conducted down the outside corridor and placed under the eye of Roustrand the Mameluke.

"Now!" cried Napoleon, as Fouche returned. "I think we can lay our hands on the wielder of the infamous pin."

"Is she not out yonder, Sire?" and Fouche gestured toward the door.

"No. She has revealed the name of one who is in collusion with the real destroyer. She saw him and the destroyer herself in the Champs Elysees last night."

Fouche's brow cleared as the sun bursts out from a tangle of dark clouds.

"Arrest Laurent St. Denis at once!" continued Napoleon. "It is a conspiracy. I believe the woman told the truth. Why should she lie to me in a case of this kind? Quick! I will show the traitors that the hand of Napoleon is one of steel!" And he turned his back on Fouche and sank heavily into his chair.

CHAPTER XV.

SEALED LIPS.

"You met with success? I can see it in your demeanor."

The woman known as Julie Leclerc had entered a room, and stood confronting Feroc St. Hillaire, who, reclining on a cot, was nursing the injury he had received at the hands of St. Denis.

"I played the game to a finish," she went on, as her dark eyes sparkled with eagerness. "I fell into the hands of Fouche, and had the pleasure of spending a short time in the Abbaye Prison. Then I was conducted into the Emperor's presence and was left alone with him."

"Good!" cried Hillaire. "You told his majesty of the scene in the Champs Elysees?"

"I left nothing untold."

"And the Emperor? How did he receive your narrative?"

"Like a man who will strike and strike quickly," was the reply. "Ere this, no doubt, orders have been issued for the arrest of Laurent St. Denis."

"You're an angel, Julie!" exclaimed the Hussar. "I shall never forget your invaluable services. I shall be myself soon, and then if this fellow should escape the meshes of the police, I will attend to him myself. I am gaining strength every hour. It is hard to slay an old lion like St. Hillaire."

Fouche was only too eager to carry out the commands of his famed ruler. Almost before Julie Leclerc reached St. Hillaire's pension, his minions had invaded Laurent's house and the young man was under arrest. He submitted with all the grace he could assume, for he was informed that the order of arrest had come direct from the Tuileries, and in a short time he was reflecting in a cell in the most noted prison in Paris.

It was near midnight when he was taken from his cell and brought before the officials in a large room guarded by a platoon of gendarmes. Fouche himself occupied a raised seat flanked by other heads of the police department, and Laurent looked into the faces of his judges and sought in vain for leniency there.

"Citizen St. Denis," said the Black Adder, in stern tones, "you are accused of being in conspiracy against the life of the Emperor Napoleon. You will answer questions which will now be put to you, but let me first inform you that this august court holds within its hands certain evidence which cannot be contradicted."

Laurent made no reply, but waited for the inquisition.

"Citizen St. Denis," proceeded Fouche, "were you or were you not in the Champs Elysees at the hour of nine on the night of the seventh?"

"I was there," answered Laurent, promptly.

"And at that hour you encountered a female clothed in black?"

Laurent started, but his fortitude did not desert him.

"I did meet such a person at the hour mentioned in the park of the Champs Elysees," he returned.

"And that female showed you an instrument of steel which you took in your hands?"

"That is true."

There was a perceptible flutter in the tribunal at this, and a sinister look, not unmixed with triumph, glittered in Fouche's baleful orbs.

"You met that woman by appointment——"

"I did not!" interrupted Laurent, in resonant tones. "The meeting was purely accidental."

"Ha! accidental," sneered Fouche, with a quick glance at his colleagues.

"Entirely so," reiterated Laurent.

"Who was this woman, Citizen St. Denis?"

Laurent's lips came together with resolution, and he faced his accusers boldly and with the air of a man innocent of guilt.

"I refuse to answer!" said he.

There was a murmur which Fouche instantly checked.

"Beware!" he cried, bestowing a severe look upon the prisoner. "Silence may be construed as guilt."

"You can construe my silence as you please," was the reply. "I refuse to reply to your last interrogation."

"Is your answer final?"

"It is final," said Laurent, inclining his head.

Fouche for a moment consulted with his brother officials.

"Remove the prisoner back to his cell," he said, with a wave of his hand, and Laurent was placed between a file of guards and escorted away.

The new day came, and all Paris knew that the lover of Vivenne Dubois had been arrested in connection with the triple mysteries that had overwhelmed Paris. He had met in the Champs Elysees the woman who was suspected of wielding the poisoned pin; he had been brought before the court of the imperial police, had acknowledged meeting the woman, but had refused to reveal her identity. This smacked so strongly of guilt that it was accepted as positive evidence, and there was a cry for the blood of Laurent St. Denis.

But there was one thing that still puzzled the populace. The presence of the woman in black had preceded the deaths of Colonel D'Ancre and the Marquise de Bricourt, but no such being had been seen at the bal masque of the Duchess du Villiers. Those who believed that the three tragedies were the work of the same destroyer argued that the Woman in Black had gone to the ball in gorgeous costume and delivered the deadly blow under the splendid lights that illuminated the stately palace. If this were true, who was she?

This same question had found a lodgment in the bosom of Napoleon. It gave him food for the deepest thought, and more than once he dropped his other duties and went back to the mystery. Laurent's refusal to disclose the name of the woman whom he encountered in the park confirmed the narrative of Julie Leclerc. But the Emperor did not know that the woman was in the pay of Feroc St. Hillaire, that she was jingling his money in her purse and stood ready to do any bidding his heart might dictate in his hatred of St. Denis.

The news of Laurent's arrest drifted into Vivenne's chambers.

"What!" cried the Rose of Paris. "Laurent arrested for complicity in the three tragedies in high life? Impossible!"

But it was terribly true. The journals in their accounts of the apprehension and examination enlarged upon the stories,

"Beware how you deceive me!"

and Vivenne read how her lover had met the accusation, and how he had refused to expose the one whom he met under the trees.

Would they let her see Laurent? The thought sent a thrill through every fiber of her being. She lost no time making application for an interview, and for once the Black Adder was merciful. When the door leading to Laurent's cell was thrown open and she entered, the prisoner turned from the little barred window at which he stood and uttered an exclamation of astonishment.

"Vivenne!" he exclaimed, stepping forward and throwing out his hands, but almost immediately recoiled and his face became clouded. "You have come to tell me that you believe in my guilt?"

"No, Laurent, you cannot be guilty!" cried Vivenne. "It is utterly impossible."

"You have heard all?"

"I have read accounts of your examination by the police tribunal, but they must have been overdrawn."

"They were colored to some extent, but in the main are correct."

"It is true, then, that you met this black-robed woman in the park?"

"I do not deny it."

"It is true that she showed you an instrument that will take human life?"

"That also is true, sweetheart."

The fair girl seemed to shrink from him.

"Why did you not reveal her identity and save yourself?" she cried, coming forward.

"I could not, Vivenne."

"You never will?"

"I must keep the secret of that night," was the startling reply.

"To your own destruction and the loss of my happiness?"

This seemed too much for Laurent. He bowed his head and his whole form trembled in the silence and agony of the moment.

"If you only knew, Vivenne!" and the words seemed torn from the depths of his soul. "If you only knew, you would not look upon me as a guilty being."

"I do not look upon you as such," was the instant answer. "You cannot have conspired against the friends of the Emperor. But this woman who strikes with the poisoned pin——"

"What proof is there," interrupted Laurent, "that the woman whom I met that night is the wielder of that secret implement of death? Was such a creature observed at the bal masque of the Duchess du Villiers?"

"It is true she was not——"

"The Du Villiers palace was guarded against just such a woman. Desiree Du Villiers was slain in the midst of the waltz when she was surrounded by her friends, including the Empress."

"Yes."

"The Black Woman was not visible?"

"That is true, Laurent. I have thought of this."

"And yet you come to me to question me in a matter which I have sworn to guard as sacredly as I would guard you, my love."

"I could not help it, dear!" cried Vivenne. "It was torture for me to sit quietly in my boudoir and think of these terrible things. You must speak, Laurent."

"I cannot, sweetheart," was the reply. "They will condemn you. They will have your head for your silence."

"What is the head of one man?" he cried, madly.

"But it is yours, love! It is the head of Laurent, the man to whom I have given all the adoration I possess." She recoiled and laid her hand on the heavy iron lock of the prison door. "Heaven pity me!" was wrung from her heart. "Speak the name of the woman whom you met in the Champs Elysees, and we shall be happy."

The look he gave her sank into the depths of her heart.

"I cannot. Not yet!" and taking her in his arms he covered her face with kisses. "Know this, Vivenne. My kisses are not those of a guilty man," and he released her with a last fond embrace.

CHAPTER XVI.

VIVENNE TURNS HUNTRESS.

"Andre, come hither."

These words, spoken by Vivenne Dubois, were addressed to a young man soon after her return from the distracting interview with Laurent in prison.

"I am at your service, mademoiselle," returned the servant, as folding his arms he awaited whatever commands his mistress deigned to issue.

"You know your Paris, Andre?" began the fair girl, watching the stalwart youth searchingly.

"I flatter myself that few know it better than Andre Laconte." The youth smiled.

"You have read the journals within the last few days?" continued Vivenne.

"I never miss them, mademoiselle. I would as soon do without my breakfast as miss the gossip of the city."

"I thought so. You have learned by a perusal of the journals that information that led to the arrest of Laurent St. Denis was furnished by one Julie Leclerc?"

"I could not avoid imbibing such news. In the first place, I had missed Mademoiselle Julie from the stage——"

"From the stage you say, Andre?" interrupted Vivenne.

"Yes, from the stage of the little Comedy Theater Francon. She was a favorite there once."

"A dancer?" said Vivenne.

"Yes, and an airy, fairy one at that."

"Where does she live?"

"She had rooms in the Rue Moulin when she delighted her patrons at the Comedy Francon."

"But now?"

"To tell the truth, mademoiselle, I had lost sight of Julie. Her appearance in print was quite a revelation."

"That is all, Andre."

The servant bowed and retired. Scarcely had the door shut behind him ere Vivenne sprang from her chair and began to change her garments.

"The Rue Moulin?" she said to herself. "There is a chance. A singer, Andre says. And this is the woman who has turned a key upon Laurent! We shall see."

The long shadows of another night were falling upon the threatened capital. A few pleasure boats were cutting the waters of the Seine, and lovers were seeking the parks to whisper soft nothings and now and then discuss the latest gossip.

The half-hooded figure that emerged from the garden at the back of Vivenne's pension did not much resemble the Rose of Paris, but the agile movements were hers, and, looking about her, she glided away and was soon lost amid the network of streets into which she had plunged.

The Rue Moulin was not the best quar-

(Continued on page fifteen.)

THE PENDULUM'S SWING

Or, ON TRACK OF THE CHECK RAISERS

By ADRIAN BLAIR

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CHAPTER VIII.

TWO OF A KIND.

UPON applying to the proprietor of the hotel for information, he learned that an automobile was kept for hire at a garage not far away.

"Just the thing to get around in. I want to cover a lot of ground today, and will come and go as the humor seizes me. If a gentleman arrives on a train and asks for me, please keep him here until I show up. He will be a millionaire who is deeply interested with me in this enterprise."

Perhaps Walt Mason would have been greatly complimented could he have known that he was rated so highly; but then, alas! it must be along the line of an empty honor, since he had never been able to come in actual touch with those mythical millions.

The car came in response to the request which the obliging landlord sent to the garage. It was run by a bright young fellow who answered to the name of Stanley Green.

"One more favor, Mr. Crane. Would you mind my asking the loan of that precious map?"

"I was just thinking of asking why not take it with you, sir. Wait a minute, please."

So the landlord speedily handed it over.

"If you happen to run up across old Peter, please keep it out of sight, sir, because you know it is his individual property."

The detective beckoned him to approach. Then he leaned over to whisper:

"How about this driver—is he a safe man to confide my secret to? If I offered him a good bonus do you think I could seal his lips?"

"Sure you could. He's all right. I've known him ever since he was a kid, sir."

"A thousand thanks. You have relieved my mind very much. See you later, landlord."

They were off. The great operator even went so far as to turn in his seat and wave his hand back to Mr. Crane; which mark of esteem quite overcame the landlord. It promised to be a wonderful day, in so far as his fortunes were concerned.

Tarbox began by sounding the chauffeur. He explained a little later that he was interested in Alanvale real estate, and was thinking of going into a dicker with Mr. Crane and others. And then he openly promised young Green a munificent sum if he would agree to keep his lips sealed.

Of course the other gladly promised. It was not often that he had a chance to pick up a "double sawbuck" in the shape of a twenty-dollar bill, and he understood just why the gentleman from New York should want to maintain secrecy. The ways of the real estate men happened to be no mystery to Stanley Green.

Having handed over promptly half the promised bribe, the detective felt free to call upon his driver for such information as lay in his power. They visited several outlying places. All the while questions were put such as a genuine intending purchaser would be apt to ask. The map was frequently consulted, too, and proved a boon indeed.

All the while they were by degrees approaching the section where the old Remson place lay. Since he had asked many questions in connection with all other places, the detective was in a position to make inquiries here without awakening any suspicion that he was more deeply interested than heretofore.

"The landlord was telling me about this Captain Langworthy, who has the Remson place under a long lease," he remarked, as they drew near what he believed must be the house mentioned.

"Yes, sir, that's it yonder." Chauffeur Green pointed as he spoke.

Tarbox was not in the least surprised, for his first glimpse of the overgrown front, through which only fugitive glimpses of the old manse could be obtained, warned him that this must indeed be the place. It looked like a haunted place, that had been long disused. What a typical hideout for the men who found it occasionally convenient to lie low, under assumed names, until the hunt had cooled off.

"A remarkably weird estate indeed. And the gentleman does not seem inclined to clear up the front yard to any extent. He must be fond of Nature in her wildest dress. Whew! I'd hate to live there!" he observed, as the chauffeur naturally brought the car to a full stop directly in front of the gates.

"Nothing scares the Captain, sir. He's been all over the world, I hear. Reckon he just gobbled up this place because they used to say it was haunted!"

"But evidently the ghosts have not been able to frighten him and his family away; for the landlord was telling me he stays here sometimes as much as a month at a time."

"Yes, sir."

"And there's his wife, the lady with the blue eyes and the delightful laugh—Crane says she is sometimes left here with only a couple of servants for company; so she can't have ever run up against a real goblin."

"Oh! it was all a fake, sir; there couldn't have been a word of truth in it. And if so be you thought of buying up the Remson property, you'll find that they hold a pretty stiff price on it. Captain Langworthy told me so himself."

Tarbox chuckled. He could understand just why the gentleman should venture such an assertion; he did not want to be bothered during his occupancy of the premises with would-be purchasers. Perhaps there were secrets in the old house which he would not care to have curious eyes discover!

"Then you have met the gentleman?" he remarked.

"Several times, and he's a mighty interestin' talker, too. What he ain't seen you could put under a thimble. Why, he's been everywhere!"

Tarbox believed he could mention one place the gentleman had not been; but then there was a pretty strong likelihood that he was heading there pretty fast right now; and that was the penitentiary.

"Did you ever happen to hear him mention the name of his wife?"

"Why, yes, I did. It was the time his car broke down on the road, and I just happened along in time to help his old man fix things up. He gave me a five for it, too. I wish there were more gents like the Captain."

"You say you heard him speak to his wife, and call her by name?"

"He was swearing like fun, when she laughed at him, and he turned on her to say she would feel the same way if she had to crawl under a machine and get oil in her eyes. He called her Betty when he spoke."

"Oh! Then she isn't the lady I had in mind," said Tarbox; but secretly he knew better.

It was Betty who had once charmed audiences from the variety stage. In this way he had added still another convincing proof to the pile already accumulated.

Meanwhile he was surveying the tangled undergrowth that covered the grounds. To creep through such a mess in the night time must prove no easy task.

The gates had evidently been repaired, for they hung on their hinges and were closed! Apparently the inmates of the manse did not wish to extend an invitation to enter the grounds to any passer-by. But the plain marks of heavy rubber tires told that the winding driveway was in frequent use. He dared not linger longer. Any one passing by would quite naturally stop for a minute to observe the queer picture presented by the overgrown bushes, rank undergrowth and untrimmed trees. But a protracted stay might excite suspicion, providing that any one in the grounds noticed the car with its occupants.

Tarbox had really learned all he wished. He was now ready to begin his campaign, looking to the eventual downfall of the clique of criminals.

The afternoon had half gone. To keep up the deception he had Chauffeur Green take him to several more places, about which he evinced more or less interest.

"Now, home, please!" he said finally.

The landlord proved to be on the watch for him. His red face was aglow with anticipation.

"What success, sir?" he asked.

"Everything that could be desired. I believe I have seen something that I mean to corral. But it is necessary that I return to the city over night. Remember, Mr. Crane, not one word even to your wife until I see you tomorrow."

"You can depend on me, sir; I shall be dumb. Wild horses could not drag the secret out of me."

So Tarbox paid his reckoning and departed. The landlord would have accompanied him over to the station, but he would not hear of it. And as it turned out, it was a very lucky thing he begged the other to remain at his tavern, and not appear to show any unusual interest in his late guest. For a train from the city drew in, just as he arrived at the station; and among those who stepped off, the detective came face to face with a gentleman who was the living image of himself!

Of all the strange things that could have happened, this coming of the real Smith Jerrold to Alanvale on some errand, at just this identical time, was the most remarkable fatality.

CHAPTER IX.

DOUBLING ON HIS TRACKS.

It was really a ridiculous situation. The well-known real estate operator stared at his double, and turned pale. No doubt he immediately believed that he was seeing things he had no business to meet with; he had been ill, and this must be a terrible warning that his mind was wandering.

He staggered back against the wall of the station, and put a hand up before his horrified eyes, as if desirous of shutting the terrible specter out. Tarbox could even have flitted from sight just then, but he did not dare. If Smith Jerrold happened to go to the very hotel where he had just left, the game would most certainly be queered. The landlord would learn that he had been hoaxed, and might even take the trouble to communicate with Captain Langworthy, to inform him how a suspicious stranger had been making inquiries about him, and that it would be well for him to keep awake on the coming night, lest thieves break in.

He must turn the other back. That could only be done by taking Smith Jerrold fully into his confidence. He knew that the real estate man was one who could appreciate a joke, even when it happened to be on himself.

"Mr. Jerrold," he said, quietly.

Already several persons were eying them queerly; nor could they be blamed, when seeing two such twins come face to face, and rather eccentric-looking gentlemen at that.

The other allowed his hands to drop a little. He showed signs of a collapse when he discovered that the phantom of his imagination persisted in standing there, right in front of him.

"Mr. Jerrold, would you mind stepping inside the station with me for a few minutes. My train will be along directly, and I would like to tell you certain things in secret."

"W-w-who are you—the devil?"

"Well, do I look like His Satanic Majesty, sir? Now, I flattered myself that I was somewhat of a ringer for a certain well-known gentleman belonging to New York City, meaning yourself, sir."

"But what does this all mean? Is it a joke? Tell me who you are, sir, and what you are doing over here?"

The detective placed his mouth closer to the ear of the other.

"I am Jared Tarbox, and I have simply carried out a little game of assuming the personality of a good friend of mine. Please come inside, and let me tell you what it all means. We are attracting too much attention out here."

Smith Jerrold was now filled with wonder, not unmixed with awe. He knew something about the wonderful ingenuity of his friend Tarbox, but had never had the opportunity of seeing for himself what he could do in the line of assuming another character than his own. His good nature asserted itself speedily.

"Say, you gave me a nasty shock, my friend. I really thought I had gone dippy, and was seeing things no self-respecting man wants to meet up with."

He was following the detective into the station as he said this.

"No one regrets it more than I do. Fancy meeting you over here in Jersey. And you should take a notion to come to Alanvale, too, on this very afternoon. It beats anything I ever heard of, Jerrold."

The real estate man even chuckled now.

"Why, you're responsible for that, I guess, my boy. When you talked with me over the wire, and asked me if I had ever been in Alanvale, I told you I hadn't; but some fellows were wanting me to look over the town, with a view to doing something out here."

"I remember you said that, and it gave me my idea."

"Well, as afternoon came, and I felt better, a sudden notion struck me to take a run over, and spy around a little. Can't tell you what urged me to do such a queer thing, but you see I came. Imagine my feelings when I saw my double face to face. Thought I was next door to the insane asylum, sure."

"Sit down here, please, and listen while I try to explain why I have taken your name in vain."

This he did in the shortest possible space of time. Smith Jerrold was himself something of a practical joker. He soon began to smile, and gradually to laugh.

"Good! great! why, you've been all over the field in my place; and you tell me there is a fine opening for a boom here? By Jove! I'm going to follow up your preliminary work. I'll keep the thing moving. Perhaps, after all, Alanvale will be on the Jerrold map of boom towns, making the twenty-third."

"But you will go back on the next train, I hope, my friend. It would queer my game to have you meet the landlord now. Come again tomorrow. I believe that ere another sunset I shall have either landed my men back of the bars, or else they will have given me the grand laugh, and vamosed the ranch. I hear the train coming. Is it go, or stay, Jerrold?"

The other jumped up.

"Wouldn't block this clever round-up of yours for a kingdom, Tarbox. I'll go back home, and wait to hear from my able advance agent and double, before venturing out into the wilds of Jersey again. Always heard one could meet strange things over here. Know it now, by Jove! Never get over it, never!"

He was still chuckling when he boarded the train, amid the curious stares of the conductor and others who watched the couple.

Jerrold gave up his ticket back to the city.

"But I get off at the next station below, for I have arranged to meet my colleague there," he said, after the conductor had left them.

"Promise that you will come to my house uptown as soon as you have wound matters up."

"I give you my word, and thank you many times for being so considerate, Jerrold."

"Nonsense! A man would be a donkey to want to spoil such a clever game as yours. And besides, I hope I am a good citizen, ready to co-operate with the law when such an occasion arises."

So, after all, what at one time threatened to prove a calamity, turned out all right.

"Remember," said the real Smith Jerrold, as the detective arose to leave the train, "I expect you to give me all the points you collected about the values of property around Alanvale."

"Glad to favor you. Good-by."

They shook hands, much to the secret amusement of the other passengers, who thought the sight a queer one. Then Tarbox alighted.

The afternoon was well along when the train pulled out of the station and left

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him there on the platform. He had glanced around, expecting to glimpse Mason, but without success. Perhaps sufficient time had not elapsed for the other to arrive.

Just then an individual came out of the station. His appearance suggested the sporting man. Whether it was the loud check suit he wore, the aggressive way in which he cocked his soft hat over one eye, or his general devil-may-care appearance, any one with half an eye could tell that this individual was interested in matters pertaining to all sports.

He headed straight for the red-faced gentleman, as if he scented a prospective victim. A secret signal had already passed between them, so that Tarbox knew full well this was Mason. After a brief exchange of words they passed away from the station.

Desiring a quiet place to talk again had caused the detective to think of a tavern. Already had one of that type afforded him an opportunity to further his plans. In this instance the best to be found did not compare with the Alanvale Arms, but neither of them happened to be very particular.

They secured a room, and retired to it. Mason must be put in touch with all that had occurred from the time his superior landed at his destination. Of course he was deeply interested, and he awaited the coming of night with tingling nerves, realizing that it was destined to be pregnant with exciting times for himself and Tarbox.

When night finally came they descended to the diningroom of the tavern, and managed to get something that in an emergency might pass for a dinner. Later on they sauntered forth, having settled their score, and asked questions, as though intending to return to the city on the next train.

Creeping forward, he realized he had made no mistake.

Instead they made their way to a livery stable which Tarbox had located earlier. Here they bargained for the use of a horse and vehicle, to be used in driving to a little hamlet that lay some four miles inland, off the railroad.

Tarbox satisfied the scruples of the owner of the livery by placing a sum in his hands equal to the full value of the outfit. Then they got in and drove away. But had the livery man been able to watch their course after leaving town, he must have readily noticed instead of aiming toward the little hamlet mentioned so fluently, they had headed straight for Alanvale.

CHAPTER X.

THE WELL-GUARDED HOUSE.

They allowed the horse to take his time, since haste was really no part of their programme. The moon shone brightly, and it was positively a pleasure to be abroad, though neither of the detectives could afford to give that view of the matter any serious attention. They had too many other things to hold their interest just then.

To invade a hostile camp, guarded by so clever a scamp as Achilles Cropsey, with three other equally desperate pals, was a task of no small magnitude. What they had tried to do to Walt Mason over Flatbush way was but a fair sample of the ferocity and utter depravity of their natures. To hide their secrets from the public gaze they would not hesitate even to commit murder most foul. And it would be a pleasure to put such foes as Tarbox and his colleague out of the running. Doubtless after that experience, they would be unusually alert, fearful lest the sleuth they hated so bitterly might still be on their track.

They had covered their trail most sagaciously; but every one of them knew the reputation which Jared Tarbox had for finding concealed things. Evidently, when the two detectives once invaded those tangled thickets that surrounded the Remson place, they must be on the watch every second of the time lest they fall into some terrible trap. And when finally they found themselves close to the borders of Alanvale, Tarbox availed himself of his knowledge of the roads, gleaned from that borrowed map, to keep clear of the station. He did not want to run across either mine host of the Alanvale Arms, or Chauffeur Green.

It was about ten o'clock when the lone vehicle turned off the main traveled road, and entered upon that on which the Remson place was located. As usual, Tarbox had arranged many of the particulars of his affair beforehand. For instance, anticipating this return, he had even picked out the patch of woods in which the vehicle might be safely left.

On foot he and his comrade now approached the border of the estate, where he had every reason in the world to believe that the most desperate aggregation of crooks the country had known for some time past, had their headquarters. Instead of coming by way of the road, and entering through the gate, it was his intention to try the rear. If the inmates were on the watch for intruders or police spies, they would most naturally guard that winding drive, with its overgrown borders; and might neglect the back territory.

They made slow progress, for the ground was rough, and the obstacles many. After some time a fence loomed up, evidently protecting the rear of the house grounds. But Tarbox believed they would have little trouble in getting past this.

Since the place had been allowed to fall into such a condition of dilapidation, doubtless the town boys must have played hide-and-seek around the house that had such a shady reputation as the abode of ghosts. In that case, they would surely have jerked numerous planks from the high fence. His reasoning, as usual, was sound. They did not have to move along the fence twenty feet before an opening was discovered.

Tarbox had a stout stick in his hand. With this he poked in the dense shadow that lay just beyond this inviting opening. If he were fishing for a bite he got it speedily enough, for there was a sudden suggestive and steel-like snap, and the staff was jerked rudely out of his grasp.

"Phew!" whispered Mason. "What was that?"

"Sounded like a bear trap going off; but we'll soon find out," responded the other, as he now pushed one leg through the opening.

His suspicions were immediately confirmed. Cropsey must have shipped out a number of these sharp-toothed steel contraptions; and at night time they were placed where they would be apt to nab any prospective trespasser.

When Walt felt the grim closed teeth that gripped the stout stick so firmly, he was glad that caution had caused his companion to test the route before either of them trusted a leg through the aperture. Those huge jaws would have taken hold with such vim that it must have meant a long vacation, or even lameness through life.

"Get another stick, and please make sure of your ground, sir!" he whispered, as he arose after making that examination.

Nor was the detective loath to follow up his advice, since he knew not what further traps might lie in the way.

They made their way cautiously along, creeping under vines, and through bushes that riotously covered every foot of ground. It was Mason who tugged at the sleeve of his confederate after about ten minutes of this slow advance.

"A light!" he whispered.

Tarbox had espied it at just the same time, gleaming through the tangled mass of untrammeled growth. Evidently it must be from a window of the old manse, and from its height he judged that this same window would be located in the second story.

"I guess they're here, all right," muttered Tarbox, half to himself and partly to satisfy Mason.

"Yes, because I saw something pass between the light and ourselves just then," came the reply.

That would indicate the position of the lamp, which could not be in the window itself, but on the further side of the room.

They continued to move closer, every foot gained counting for something. Not a sound could be heard around them, all being as silent as death itself.

Tarbox was glad on one account; he had seen no sign of any watchdog during the afternoon; the hotel man, and also the chauffeur, had knowledge of such a guardian belonging to Captain Langworthy; but there had always been the chance that the cautious crook might have thought to protect his rookery in such a way. And a bulldog, once aroused, would play havoc with all the detective's carefully arranged plans.

Later on, and they had gained the wall of the building, which proved to be of stone, just as Tarbox might have guessed. To get in was the next question.

Some men would have gone away, after making sure that the game had been found, to return with sufficient force completely to surround the house. Tarbox figured another way.

He felt positive that under such conditions, those within would defy arrest, and fight to the last gasp ere yielding, knowing what sort of fate awaited them. He believed that the same end could be accomplished by strategy. Peril never daunted this man, for he had supped with it in every form, these many years.

He and Mason had had a perfect understanding. They were to separate, and each pursue a different way of attaining the same end. Then, if one of them should get into trouble, there remained a chance of the other coming to the rescue. They had certain signals which would serve as a means of communication, should the necessity arise. So, while Tarbox moved off to the right, his confederate took the other course.

The detective closely examined every step of the way, constantly on the lookout for a means of entering the manse. The moon had but small chance to sift her soft light through the numerous closely-woven branches overhead; but Tarbox avoided every spot that was in any way thus illuminated.

He found that the lower windows seemed to be tightly secured with stout shutters of the old type, being solid, and not latticed. These were an effectual safeguard against thieves, or other undesirable visitors; and if more houses had them today there would be a falling off in the number of unlawful entries.

He even kept an eye around for some way of entering the cellar, remembering his success on the preceding night down in Flatbush. Then another idea flashed into his brain. It was brought about by his discovering a ladder that had at some time fallen to the ground. With that he could easily gain the roof of the extension; and by raising it again, in this way he might manage to reach the main roof. An unfastened scuttle would allow of entrance; or, if hard out he might even crawl through some attic window.

He studied the lay of things ere committing himself to any policy. The temptation proved irresistible, and so he pro-

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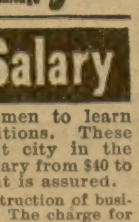

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ceeded softly to examine that prostrate ladder. He wished to make absolutely certain that its rounds were still in a good state of preservation; for it would be a sorry joke if one of them gave way under his weight, to precipitate him to the ground, and likewise alarm the house.

But so far as he could tell, the ladder seemed to be all right; and once this fact had been ascertained he started slowly and silently to raise it into position.

CHAPTER XI.

THANKS TO THE LADDER.

Having placed the ladder firmly against the dark side of the brick extension of the house of mystery, Tarbox prepared to ascend. He used the utmost care. Reaching the roof he drew himself up, and listened to see if he could discover any suspicious movement.

What he really feared was that some one might be in the overgrown garden below; for in such a case discovery would be speedy; since his figure must be outlined against the sky, despite the friendly assistance and cover afforded by the wide-spreading tree branches.

The night wind murmured among the tops of the trees; while a limb that grew over the main house rubbed the parapet with a caressing sound that was not unlike a groan. He remembered that all sorts of strange stories had been passed around by the people of Alanvale about this same house; and perhaps that weird sound of the limb scraping an acquaintance with the edge of the roof may have had something to do with these.

Now he was drawing the short ladder up, inch by inch. Once he placed it in position, just where his quick eye had selected, the way would be clear to gain the upper roof, also nearly flat. Again he started to ascend.

A window looked out on the roof of the extension, but it also had a closed blind; nor was he able to alter the conditions when he tried to move this. His original plan must be carried out. Not anticipating the coming of any foe from above, doubtless those within the house would have neglected to take any precautions looking toward the guarding of this avenue.

He crouched there just below the parapet, and took another survey. It required one energetic pull to carry him over the last ditch. Satisfied that to delay further would do him no particular good, and might lead to positive harm, Tarbox summoned his muscular energies to the task. Another minute, and he found himself flat on the roof, a little winded, but otherwise in fine physical condition.

As he had surmised, he found that it was one of those old-fashioned roofs, in which tar-paper and gravel, with a certain amount of tar, combine to resist the weather, and keep out cold and rain. On hands and knees he crawled toward the trap, which he could plainly discern in the center of the wide roof.

From this aerie one might be able to see quite some distance. Tarbox found himself hoping that some of the inmates of the house came up here occasionally to slurvey the scenery; and that possibly they were a little negligent when it came to fastening the scuttle.

He tried it as soon as he had cautiously crawled to the spot, deeming it unwise to rise to his feet, lest he make more noise than was compatible with safety.

It gave to his touch!

Looking upward the detective noted that a black cloud was sailing across the heavens, and would presently arrive in the vicinity of the moon. He deemed it the part of wisdom to wait until the face of the bright lantern in the sky had been covered by this mask, ere lifting the scuttle, and attempting entrance. In all such little ways did he prove himself competent to match wits with the law-breakers against whom he was now boldly pitting himself.

Hardly had the cloud sailed across the face of the moon than he had that trap raised and lowered back on the roof. Then, pushing his lower extremities through, he sought to locate the steps or ladder which he knew must be there, using his dangling feet as a means to that end. Once he had made sure his footing, he closed the scuttle, after which he hastened to pass down.

He was now inside the house of the enemy; his bridges had been burned behind him, and it was either victory, or the other thing for him!

First of all he endeavored to get his bearings, and try to discover in what quarter burned the light which they had seen from the garden. Ah! was that the murmur of voices he caught? It told him just what he was wishing to know; and accordingly he started to advance, keeping close to the wall.

He believed he was in a room that occupied the center of the upper floor; there had been a space of three feet or more between the roof proper and what seemed to be the ceiling below—an air chamber intended to absorb much of the heat and cold, according to the season. He could easily have hidden himself in this cavity had there been any need; but just then he had a burning desire to get in closer touch with the men he had come to apprehend, and could not brook unnecessary delay. Creeping forward, he soon realized that he had made no mistake, for there were people in the next apartment, and from time to time they exchanged words.

Yes, and there was apparently some sort of machinery going also; for he could catch a soft, purring sound, as of well-oiled parts moving back and forth. Was it the old story again, and did these four dare-devil crooks use this old manse as a manufacturing plant for the issuing of counterfeit bills?

One of the party, Gabe Langley, was gifted in that way, since he had been employed in the Government printing works at Washington, years ago, as an expert steel engraver. Still, Tarbox could hardly believe that they were operating along that line. It was so much easier for clever rogues of their stamp to forge checks, raise notes, or imitate the certification on large checks, so that they would be paid without question—they could hardly bother with such a risky and laborious method of cheating the public as actually printing spurious bills.

How could he spy upon them, and make sure? Was it possible to do so from that air chamber above? Dared he strike a noiseless match, and see what the nature of his surroundings might be?

He made a mental survey of the entire situation, and then decided upon his actions. There was really no chance that he could see to spy upon the inmates of the room from beyond the door. And now that he reflected, he believed he had seen something that looked like a beam of light amid the gloom of that shallow basin overhead. At any rate, it was worth venturing. The old manse was possibly dilapidated in parts; and while Cropsey may have brought sufficient furniture out to make himself comfortable, it was not likely that he would go to the trouble of repairing bad spots in the walls or ceilings.

So Tarbox groped around again until his outstretched hand came in contact with the ladder leading upward. The ascent was made with no mishap; and so far as he could tell his weight did not cause the ladder to creak or groan in sufficient measure to reach the ears of those near by.

Now came a ticklish job. The cavity between roof and ceiling had never been intended as a storage place. It was simply an air chamber, calculated to ward off the winter's cold and summer's heat. Consequently it had nothing in the shape of a floor, the cross joists alone offering a footing. If one were so unfortunate as to slip, the chances were strongly in favor of a section of the ceiling being thrown down.

Of course Tarbox did not mean to have such a vexing accident take place. He moved with all due caution, feeling his way, inch by inch, as it were. Still he realized that things did not seem to be so substantial as he would like, age having helped to rot some of the timbers of the house, perhaps assisted by a long-neglected leak in the roof.

He had kept his eye on the small, lance-like beam of light that seemed to shoot upward from some crack in the ceiling of the room below. Now and then he stopped absolutely still to listen, wondering if there could be any way by which those beneath him could discover that some one was passing overhead—a flaking of loose calcimine from the ceiling, or some other trifling yet significant indication!

What was that monotonous sound that came at regular intervals? He decided that it must be a clock, one of those big "grandfather" keepers of time, and that each swing of the heavy pendulum was accompanied by the "tick-tick" of the works.

Was this what he had heard indistinctly before, amid the murmur of voices; and which he had taken to be the steady grind of machinery? It might be possible.

Tarbox had known many things that were seemingly mysterious, to turn out trifles light as air. Perhaps, when he looked down upon the inmates of the room below, he might find that they were simply resting and conversing, after a game of billiards.

But all the same he did not put much stress on this innocent result of his hunt; he had passed through too long an apprenticeship in the tracking of criminals to believe that four such clever rogues would form a cabal for harmless recreation and enjoyment.

CHAPTER XII.

AN INTERRUPTION.

It took Tarbox quite a time to reach the point for which he was aiming. The little shaft of light seemed insensibly to grow broader as he approached closer. And his expectations advanced in proportion; for he was now almost certain that he would be able to accomplish what he had set out to perform, and find an opportunity to spy upon the inmates of the room below.

Eagerly then he bent low, after reaching the place of the crack. The utmost care had to be taken, lest he make some misplay that would ruin his chances, and alarm those whom he wished to watch.

He did not see all that he wished in that first look. Gazing down upon the heads of people is not a very satisfying method of observing their actions. And when the means for observation is limited to a very narrow crack in the ceiling, the difficulties increase in proportion. Still, being wise to the identity of these various persons, he was not put to great pains to identify them, even though their faces were but partly open to his inspection.

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For instance, he readily recognized Cropsey by his manner, as he sat there with one leg crossed over the other, twirling a cigar between his white fingers. It was true that he had made more or less change in his appearance, and perhaps even altered the color of his hair; but Tarbox had studied the man so long that he believed he would be able to recognize him should he run across the fellow in the disguise of a "navvy" working on a railroad in England, or an Italian stevedore on the New York steamship docks.

As to Professor Felix, there could never be a single doubt concerning him, for his personality was so pronounced that he could hardly hide his light under a bushel. And yet he, too, had taken pains to alter his looks more or less.

A third man was Gabe Langley, the man who posed as brother-in-law to Captain Morgan Langworthy, under the name of Spooner. He lay back in a chair, his dissipated face showing plainly in the light of the lamps.

The Professor was seated at a table, on which lay a multitude of things that riveted the attention of the observing sleuth. For they were all more or less connected with the illegal work of the clique of criminals—acids; stamps for marking checks; inks and pens; blank checks that possibly represented scores of big business houses; and other things of a like nature.

Evidently the master craftsman of the band was trying his hand at a new imitation, for even as Tarbox looked he saw him hold a check up admiringly, and then pass it, together with a paper that doubtless carried the true signature, over to Cropsey. The latter nodded his head as though pleased, and made some laughing remark to the penman.

Even the partly intoxicated Gabe made an effort to sit up straight, and held out his hand for the wonderful paper. Tarbox noticed that the Professor jumped up and insisted upon holding it himself while the bleary eyes of Gabe scanned the signature. Evidently he feared lest the other might, in his irresponsible condition, do something to render his brilliant work void.

Three? But there were at least four in the gang; and accordingly Tarbox began to wonder where the other man might be keeping himself. Somehow it seemed to him that as a chain is only as strong as its weakest link, perhaps the fact of Hank Purdue's absence might sooner or later prove a stumbling block in the way of the complete success of his plans.

How could these desperate characters be subdued? They stood at least four against two, so that violence might seem to be the poorest policy the detectives could adopt. Should they wait until sleep had overpowered the various inmates of the old manse, and then start a crusade aimed at subduing them, one by one?

No doubt among the many bottles which he could see on the two shelves in one corner of the laboratory such a thing as chloroform might be found; for to lawless men this drug is an essential factor in the carrying out of many of their schemes. That meant an entry to the room later on, and after that a stealthy warfare whereby the sleepers would be overcome, one by one.

Where could Mason be all this while? Was Walt also peeping in at the allies through some crack in a wall, or perhaps a keyhole?

Then came a woman's voice, calling to Cropsey from some neighboring room. It was his wife, demanding that he give over operations for the night, and seek his couch.

When the watcher in the air chamber above saw the leader of the band stretch himself, and yawning, make some remark to his companions, he rejoiced, for he believed that his vigil was at an end.

Cropsey vanished from view. Next Gabe staggered up, and grumblingly made his exit. The Professor lingered longer, as though loath to leave his beloved labor in which he seemed to take an actual pride.

Still no Purdue put in an appearance, though the detective had positive intelligence to the effect that the supposed dumb Persian servant of Langworthy had come with him that morning.

"I wish I knew where he was," Tarbox was saying to himself, as though he disliked to have this one connection missing.

Was his uneasiness simply the result of a natural desire to have all his enemies in front of him; or could it be set down as a premonition?

At last Professor Felix prepared to depart. He blew out both lamps, having lighted a candle in the primitive country fashion. Tarbox was pleased to see the last of him.

The clock struck the hour of eleven, with big sonorous notes. Already the detective had begun to back out of his uncomfortable position. He did not relax his vigilance a particle because the apartment below was now void of human occupants. A slip of a foot, and the fall of plaster from the none too secure ceiling, would prove just as great a catastrophe now as earlier. But thanks to his methods of slow progress he finally arrived at his destination without having done any mischief.

And now for a long and tedious wait. An hour at least must pass by before he could think of entering upon the next stage of the game. That would allow of a reasonable chance for all the inmates of the manor house to get to sleep, and hence he could work undisturbed.

Slowly the minutes crept by. He could hear the monotonous ticking of the clock, as the pendulum swung back and forth on its mission. Thus crouched close to the opening leading down to the interior of the house, Tarbox calmly reviewed the conditions, and fashioned his immediate plans.

Finally there came a creaking sound. The clock was about to strike the midnight hour. He had heard no signal from his confederate, and felt a growing uneasiness concerning Walt. Still, there was nothing on which to base any speculation of evil; for certainly the three men had shown no signs of alarm while he was observing them.

He began to lower himself by means of the friendly ladder. Surely by this time he might expect that sleep had overtaken all who lodged under that roof. Of course, there was always an element of risk connected with what he intended to do; but then this daring man was accustomed to taking chances when the case seemed desperate.

He was now at the door. It opened with a slight creaking sound, which in the silence of the night seemed greater than it would have been at any other time.

Once inside, and Tarbox groped his way across the laboratory, aiming to reach the side where those bottle-burdened shelves invited an investigation. His wonderful memory aided him in making a safe passage. Then he struck a match.

Before him was an array of phials and bottles with glass stoppers, which contained the acids and chemicals needed by the Professor in his calling. They were labeled, too, which was a real kindness on the part of the learned manipulator of signatures, such as Tarbox would not soon forget.

He had just discovered the phial he wanted, with the word "chloroform" on it, when a sound coming from behind caused him to turn his head quickly.

What he saw was disconcerting, to say the least. A man was just in the act of rising from a lounge that occupied an alcove which Tarbox had not seen from above—and in the dark-faced foreigner, as he appeared to be, the detective recognized an old acquaintance. The missing link was found. Hank Purdue was even then staring at him!

The continuation of this highly interesting story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. Read it. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year.

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"Oh, how lovely of you!" exclaimed the spokeswoman when she received the bit of paper and read the amount—five hundred dollars. "Oh, we didn't expect to get that much from you! We are ever so much obliged."

"So good of him!" and similar exclamations were heard as the check was passed around for the admiration of the party.

"But," said the lady who handled the check last, "you haven't signed it."

"That is because I do not wish my benefactions known to the world," said the manager, modestly. "I wish to give the check anonymously." And he bowed the ladies out with great dignity.

A Lesson.

A youth from the country was paying his first visit to Manhattan, and, accompanied by his uncle, a New York banker, went to the theater. While waiting in the lobby before the performance the country boy flung back his coat and with hands in his pockets displayed a heavy gold chain. The uncle observed the act and resolved to teach him a lesson.

While his attention was diverted the uncle slipped the watch and chain from the boy's vest, and they entered the theater.

"What time is it?" he asked, when they were seated.

The country youth felt for his timepiece and found that it was gone. Allowing him to make a thorough search for it, the uncle told him he had taken it and read him a sharp lecture.

"You are not in the country now, you know, where you can display valuables with impunity. You should be more careful. Let this be a lesson to you."

So saying, he slipped his hand into his overcoat pocket where he had put the watch. To his utter dismay he found it was gone. And when he looked to see if his own was safe he found that also had taken wings.

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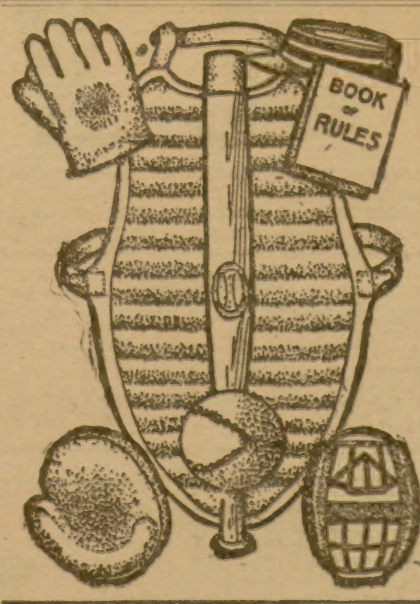

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FREE BOYS! Here is your chance to get a fine Base Ball Outfit, consisting of a COMPLETE SUIT, including shirt, pants, cap and belt, good quality, extra well sewed, or combination of big catcher's mitt, fielder's glove, catcher's mask (extra strong and durable) and rubber center ball, big league style, or fine chest protector.

Will Not Cost One Cent Send your name and we will send you 8 set of our fine pictures to dispose of at 25 cents each. Send us the $2 you collect and for your trouble will send you outfit as described. Write Today for pictures. No harm done. I take back what you can't dispose of.

EXTRA PRESENT of BASEBALL CURVER Worn on the hand it aids in giving the ball a rapid, whirling motion—thus causing a wide curve. So small it is not noticed, and they all wonder where those *AWFUL curves come from.* Be a crack pitcher and fan out the batters. Thousands of boys all over the country enthusiastic over this wonderful device. We also send instructions on how to throw all curves—very valuable. Any boy who wants to become a good pitcher can do so with our instructions and the aid of the wonderful little curver. The Curver sent as an extra present to boys who dispose of pictures promptly. Send your name to us at once and see if you can't get both Outfit and Curver for yourself. Address: **M. O. SEITZ, M 51 Chicago**

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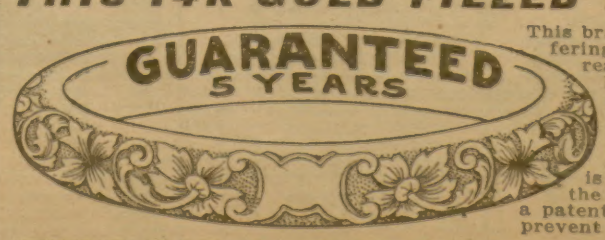


This bracelet which we are offering free to all of our readers is 14 K Gold Filled and is handsomely made in the bright English Gold Finish which is all the craze at the present time. The engraving is a beautiful design and the bracelet fastens with a patent secret lock which will prevent your losing it.

WILL LAST YOU A LIFE TIME

We know you will be pleased with it, and it is fully guaranteed to be exactly as represented or you may have another one. State whether misses' or ladies' size is wanted.

To receive this guaranteed bracelet absolutely free, just send us $2.00 for a year's subscription (new or renewal) to the Blade and Ledger and it will be sent immediately, all charges paid.

W. D. BOYCE COMPANY, 504 Dearborn Avenue, CHICAGO, ILL.

Mr. Suffrage—"I see where a burglar shot at a man whose life was saved by the bullet striking against a button of his clothes."

Mrs. Suffrage—"Well, what of that?"

Mr. Suffrage—"What of that? Oh, nothing, except that the button must have been sewed on."

An Ignorant Invalid.

"Good morning, Mrs. McCarty!" said Mrs. Ryan, as the friends met at the market. "How's all the folks getting along?"

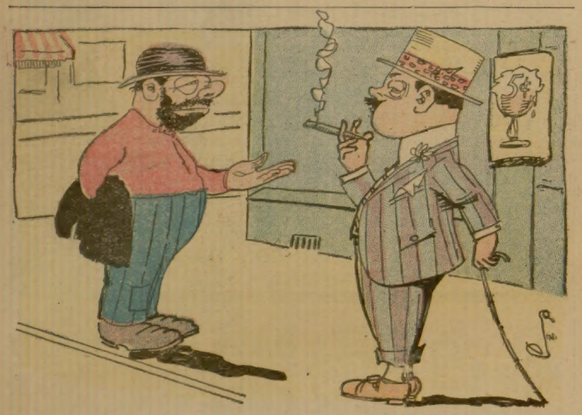
"They be all doin' well," replied Mrs. McCarty, "except my old man. He's been enjoying poor health for some toime, but this mornin' he complained of feelin' better."

An Opening.

"What is your reason for refusing to shake hands with that man?"

"I desire to make an example of him, answered the severe statesman.

"But you are giving him a chance to make himself interesting. He will go around telling people he is the only man in the State who has not shaken hands with you."



Stranger—"Could you help a poor feller whose wife and children are thirsty?"

Jones—"Why are they thirsty?"

Stranger—"Why, we just got a case of beer from a kind lady, but we ain't got no money to buy a corkscrew, see?"

A Cripple.

Tramp—"I'd like ter do something to pay fer all this, but I'm a cripple, mum."

Housekeeper—"You don't look it. What's the matter?"

Tramp—"Writer's cramp, mum. I've been keepin' a list of all th' people wot offered me work, mum."

Great Climate.

"Is this a healthy town?"

"Healthy! Why, when I came here I only weighed sixty pounds, and now look at me. I tip the scales at 180."

"Been here long?"

"Lemme see; I guess I was 8 when I arrived."

A Wise Provision.

Mr. Baldie—"I have discovered that baldness is a wise provision of nature."

Philosopher—"That's a discovery, surely."

"Yes. You have noticed, doubtless, that I am bald as a billiard ball as far down as the rim of my hat, but below that the hair grows as luxuriantly as ever."

"Yes; that is usually the case."

"Exactly. Well, now comes my discovery. Barber shops are often too drafty, you know."

"Very frequently."

"Too true. Sure to give folks influenza, pneumonia, and I don't know what all."

"Drafts are always dangerous."

"That's it. Well, a bald-headed man can have his hair cut without removing his hat."

Looking Ahead.

Edith—"Seems to me that you are buying an awful lot of clothes, even for your marriage."

Marie—"Well, you see, papa is liberal when he thinks that he is getting me off his hands and there's no telling what he'll do when he finds that he has Fred on his hands."

Sparke—"What is your idea of real auto enthusiasts?"

Sharke—"People who won't even have horseradish on the table."

Real Dressy.

An associated charity worker, making a visit to a poor mountain woman in a Southern town, observed that her three small children wore spectacles.

"It's a pity that they all have trouble with their eyes, isn't it?" she remarked, sympathetically, to the mother.

"There ain't nothing the matter with their eyes, 'm."

"Then why on earth do you disfigure them with glasses?" asked the visitor, in wonderment.

The woman bridled. "Why, I thinks they look lovely," she said. "I like them on little children. I thinks they're real dressy."

Hard Luck.

Mrs. Brophy lived in front of the tenement house and Mrs. Dugan occupied rooms in the rear of the building. Mrs. Brophy met Mrs. Dugan in the hall and said:

"Them Turks is killin' Christians an' draggin' them through the streets."

"Ye don't tell me," exclaimed Mrs. Dugan. "That's the d——l of livin' in the rear. I never see nothin'."

Woman's Way.

"A Wyoming woman is able to shoot a coin from her husband's forefingers."

"Isn't that the limit? They're bound to get it one way or another, aren't they?"

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THIS INTERVIEW WILL BE AS ADVANTAGEOUS TO YOU AS TO US.—
BUT I AIN'T—
SAY!! YOU'RE IN TH' WRONG PEW—I'M BILL JONES TH' JANITOR!

Willing to Humor Her.

Doctor—"You say you always burn this lamp in your room all night?"

Woman—"Always. I can't sleep without a lamp."

Doctor—"My dear madam, I can give you a few simple chemicals which you can easily mix before retiring. They will give off just as much blood-poisoning and sleep-inducing gas as a lamp, and won't be half so much trouble."

Nothing Left.

Wife—"Wake up! There are thieves in the house!"

Husband—"Go down and show them your new spring hat, and they won't waste any time looking for money here."

On to Him.

"Tone thought seriously of marrying for money," "Why didn't you, the—" "The girl in the case was a thinker, too."

In the End.

"Now they threaten to dissolve the lime trust."

"That's probably means more whitewash."

Lack of Confidence.

"Oh, mother," sobbed the young wife, "I've discovered that John does not trust me!"

"Why, my child, what has he done?"

"Well, you know, I cooked my first dinner for him today, and he invited a friend to dine with him."

The sobs broke out afresh. "And, oh, mother, the man he invited was a doctor!"

His Sympathy.

"Doesn't the story of the prodigal son bring tears to your eyes?"

"Yes," replied Farmer Corntossel. "Every time I hear the story I can't help sympathizing with the fatted calf."

Paying in Kind.

He came in and laid down some suspicious-looking bills, with a genuine dollar bill on top.

"I want to pay for that barrel of potatoes I got."

"Can't take this money," said the dealer.

"Why not?"

"Most of it isn't good."

"The top layer is good; is it not?"

"Yes."

"That's the way it was with the potatoes."

Little Brother Speaks.

Florence, who was an ardent admirer of her own vocal qualities, had been selected to sing a solo at a church entertainment.

The following morning at the breakfast table she remarked to her younger brother:

"Well, I never thought my voice would fill that large hall."

"Neither did I," answered her brother unfeelingly. "I thought it would empty it."

Bill—"I'm afraid to propose to her."

Tim—"Has she offered you no encouragement?"

Bill—"Oh, yis. She gives me a hot whisky whin I call, but one ain't enough."

Space Was Limited.

Editor's Wife—"I stopped at your office today, with an item for the want column, and the clerk asked pay for it."

Editor—"He did not know you, of course."

Wife—"Well, I want you to tell him that all my wants are to be printed free."

Editor—"Mercy no! I can't afford to enlarge the paper, my dear. But there is room for a few of your wants, say a thousand or so a month."

Sad Havoc.

Western Man—"We had a terrible conflagration in Dugout City last week. Only seventeen houses left standing."

Eastern Man—"My goodness! How many were there before the fire."

Western Man—"Nineteen."

Euchered.

"Does your husband object to your taking part in politics?" asked Mrs. Crossgrain.

"Certainly not," replied Mrs. Baring Banners.

"Then where's the fun in doing so?"

Not Posted.

Gabe—"How many cuss words are there in the English language?"

Steve—"Darned if I know! I never owned a parrot."

Jinks—"Are they up-to-date?"

Binks—"Are they? There goes their maid on roller skates after their gasoline baby buggy."

Significant Demonstration.

"I suppose you will insist upon a revision of the tariff?"

"Yes," replied the newly elected member of Congress.

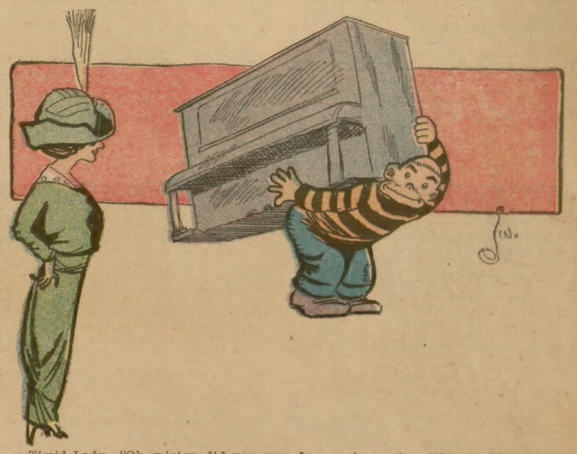
"How do you want it revised?"

"I haven't made up my mind. The thing of importance is to keep insisting in a loud tone of voice that will keep my constituents apprised of the fact that I am a busy patriot."

Wouldn't Be Bossed.

"But, madam," said the surgeon, after the woman had recovered consciousness in the hospital, "why didn't you stop when the crossing policeman held up his hand? Then you wouldn't have been struck by the automobile."

"What! Me stop when Jim Maginnis holds up his hand? I'd let you know I'm his wife, an' he never saw the day when he could boss me."



Timid Lady—"Oh, mister, did you ever drop a piano when lifting it?"

Piano Mover—"Once, lady. A man gave me $25 to let his family piano drop out of a fourth story window."

Her Reason.

"Did you struggle when he tried to kiss you?"

"No, mamma."

"But why did you not?"

"Why, mamma, you ought to know from his appearance that he isn't very strong."

Different Kind.

"Pa, Mr. Rip is a very unusual young man and you ought to be glad to have him for a son-in-law. He has joined the great uplifting forces."

The father looked significantly at his substantial boot.

"So have I," he said, chuckling.

A LUCKY FALL

Perkins—"Ah, there's that peach of a millionaire's daughter! I must salute her in style! I must win her; I need the money——"

"Whoof! Blast that banana-skin! Here I go making a jackass of myself——"

"Whump! Yee! Bang! Will I never quit falling! She's leaving in disgust——"

"Well, cocktails and boquets of roses! Blamed if there ain't a fifty-dollar bill! I 'most fell on it! Blessings upon that banana-skin!"

Out of the Dark

Or, PLUCKED FROM MARRIAGE VOWS

By WILLIS C. KING

He could discern the form of a man.

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Begun in No. 24, June 14. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents, or by mail from the office of publication.

CHAPTER XIV.

COMPLETELY disconcerted by Virginia's latest flight, Westlake did not know what move he should make next. It was quite evident to him that the girl was deeply wounded by his supposed duplicity, and that he could hope to accomplish nothing by crying his way through a dark forest.

With the two companions he had with him there was no opportunity for him to make vocal his real feelings. With that crass worshiper of caste, Albert Goodnoe, and that lovelorn artist, Karl Keinburg, listening to him, he could not cry out to the night that he loved Virginia in the wild hope that she would hear him and believe him. All three did call, but they could only beg her to answer them, to come to the automobile and they would help her.

"You're the boss; now what do you want to do?" asked the lawyer, when he felt that she would not answer them.

"Virginia's an eerie little sprite," said Keinberg, "and there's no use looking for her if she has determined that she will not be found."

"Then we have nothing we can do until morning," Westlake concluded.

"Good! We'll be back in New York by ten o'clock. I've got a hard day's work ahead of me at the office."

"You may have a hard day's work ahead of you, but it's not in New York. You lawyers are too hasty some times. I've told you that we three were to have no other vocation, avocation, or relaxation until we find Virginia Joyce. Keinburg's sticking by me, and you've got to, too."

"But we can't sleep here in the wilderness. And I don't see any ravens descending from above with a New York brand of manna."

"Did you ever see an artist that wasn't hungry?" laughed Keinburg.

"I'm ashamed of you both."

The host on this strange expedition recognized, however, that since they could not go ahead with their search it would be best to find lodgings for the night. He laughed when he said that he was ashamed of them; and finding that Keinburg and Westlake saw the humor of the situation, Goodnoe laughed, too.

"Sanford's is the nearest inn," ventured Henri. He was as hungry as were the others.

"Which way is it?"

"It's that roadhouse above Dutro two or three miles."

"The pretty little place with the green shutters?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then turn around, and let's go there. They can put us up for the night, and in the morning we can come back here to find out where Virginia is hiding."

The men climbed into the car, and Henri turned to the north and headed for Sanford's Inn.

Arrived at the hotel, they found that they could secure accommodations. Dinner was immediately ordered. Dressing for dinner consisted in combing one's hair with a broken comb, and brushing it with a wire brush that scratched the scalp. Two of the guests were accustomed to luxury, and the lack of facilities was unpleasant. In the morning Westlake had ordered Bantock to pack a bag for him, but of course it had not been put in the machine. So the manager of the party was as badly off as were the others.

"I hope the evening doesn't hang heavy on your hands," Westlake announced to his two companions, when they were not more than halfway through their dinner. "I am spending the evening out."

"Where are you going? Don't do anything foolish."

The lawyer felt responsible for his harebrained client, as he considered him, and he did not wish him to run into any dangers unaccompanied.

"I am going to pay a call on a lady, and I'm going alone."

Goodnoe guessed that he was going to see Miss Bardeen. He wondered at the [illegible], but he felt that it was the best thing that could happen. He knew of their intimacy, and approved of it.

"Shall we put a light in the window to guide the returning wanderer?"

"No, thanks. I can find my way back all right."

Westlake had not taken much time to eat dinner. He was too wrought up to feel hungry. Even before the others had finished he rose from the table and went out to the car. The faithful Henri came running out from the servant's hall, but the owner would permit him to do nothing except turn up the lights and crank the machine.

"Do I go with you, sir?"

"No, Henri. I'm just going down to Hjelmer's Hall. I'll be back by eleven o'clock."

The ride to Hjelmer's Hall was without incident. Both at Dutro and at Melhurst he stopped to see if Virginia by any chance might be at the station. Both places were deserted.

Hjelmer's Hall sat well back from the road on a [illegible] that had spread out to the west an imposing view of the Hudson River. The place derived its name from an ancestor of Mrs. Bardeen who before her marriage was a Miss Knudsen.

Perhaps his imagination more than anything else made the house seem to have an untenanted appearance. As there were two or three lights to be seen, the place could not look altogether desolate. In answer to his ring, after a long time he was admitted by the butler.

The house had the chill atmosphere of a place newly opened, and Westlake smiled grimly when he wondered if the chill would extend to the reception given him by Emily Bardeen. In the library there was a cheerful wood fire, and he threw himself down on the sofa in front of it. Soon the fire began to warm him with its kindly glow, and it was not long before he was saying to himself that it was deucedly pleasant at Hjelmer's Hall, and that Emily was a deucedly nice girl.

Then, gazing into the fire, he thought of Virginia. She was so different from every one else he had ever known. He had known girls with eyes as blue, with hair as golden, with chin as femininely resolute; but where was there another with her grace, her arch expression, her vivacity, her charm? In short, Virginia was Virginia, and there was none like her.

These pleasant fire fancies were interrupted by the entrance of Emily Bardeen. As Westlake came forward to greet her he could not help noticing that she had a surprised, puzzled look. He was not dressed for an evening call, but he knew that her thoughts were far beyond such a thing as an unconventional costume.

"I didn't expect you until tomorrow, Byrd, but you are just as welcome. Did Wheeler take your things? I told him to prepare the blue room for you."

"It's just a call tonight, Emily. I happened to be up here by accident, I might say. Tomorrow I'll arrive in due state. Let's just pretend that tonight I've dropped out of a balloon for a little visit."

She looked at him questioningly, but since he made no present offer to explain she did not press him for explanations. She sank into a corner of the sofa, turning somewhat away from the fire that she might look at him.

As she sat so, Westlake was compelled to pay her the meed of admiration that was due her. She was indeed a beautiful woman, stately, elegant, showing in every word and every movement that back of her were generations of culture and refinement. But cold she was, and formal. When she was effusive it was with an effort. Her blonde beauty seemed to have been chiseled out of ice.

"Mamma has been very curious about our meeting at Melhurst. Neither of us expected to see you, you know. We had expected to have some word from you in town today."

He could see that she was trying to learn if he had seen the paper with the announcement of their engagement. It suddenly occurred to him that it would be best for him to pretend ignorance of the entire matter.

"I haven't been in the city but for a little while today. This morning I found your note reminding me of our party here, but as I had already accepted I didn't think to telephone you."

Then Westlake switched the conversation into safer channels. Talk along impersonal lines would not betray him into any damaging admissions, or lead up to a sentimental vein which might prove dangerous.

Just before he was ready to leave, he decided to ask her if she knew anything of Breyerton Tower. He also dearly wished to ask if she knew anything of Virginia Joyce, but he thought it best to remain silent regarding the girl.

"It's a girls' school, that's all I know. It lies on the other side of Melhurst, back from the river. They don't seem to have many pupils. Sometimes I see a girl or two at the station, rather ordinary-looking I should say."

"Do you know Mrs. Breyerton?"

"No."

"Or her son?"

"That's funny. I don't know him, but he's coming over tomorrow to see mother. Rev. Penfield Breyerton he said his name was."

"Don't you know the minister in your own parish?"

"Yes. He's Dr. Haldane."

"How about Breyerton?"

"He has some sort of chapel, but I don't think he's actively connected with our church."

"What does he wish to see your mother about?"

"Didn't say. Just asked if he might call at three o'clock."

"Then I shall be here by two o'clock."

The man rose to go. Cold as she was by nature, Emily Bardeen was unable to conceal altogether her disappointment over the manner in which they had passed the evening. He had baffled all her attempts to find out his mission at Melhurst, and although he had been as friendly as of old, there was a certain constraint about him she could not help but feel.

"Then we shall see you tomorrow, Byrd."

"Tomorrow, dear lady."

He took her hand, bowed low, and without another word departed.

CHAPTER XV.

When coming up from New York, it had been Westlake's intention to look along the road for the church wherein he had had his strange encounter. As it developed, this lay to the north of Melhurst, on a stretch of road which he had covered at a mile-a-minute clip when trying to overtake the train which carried Virginia Joyce.

Now, as he set out from Hjelmer's Hall for Sanford's Inn, he decided that he would go along slowly and see how well he remembered the spot. This night was quite different from the one which had preceded it. There were clouds in the sky, but there had been no rain. The woods were still damp, however, from the soaking they had received the night Virginia's wedding was to have taken place.

As he had done coming down earlier in the evening, at the Melhurst station the automobilist stopped to reconnoiter. The place was deserted. There was not even a light in the station. One or two of the houses which formed the small settlement had lights in them, but quiet reigned everywhere. There being nothing to delay him further, after seeing that no one was abroad, Westlake started his machine, and at a slow pace took the road he had traveled so rapidly at dusk.

He had gone perhaps a couple of miles when the lay of his land suddenly took on a familiar appearance. Going at a snail's pace he looked closely at the fence on his right, and soon was rewarded by a sight of the stile where had taken place the final encounter. Of it he knew only by report, because through the fight he lay unconscious, as a result of Penfield Breyerton's cowardly blow in the dark.

The clouds were heavily banked, but from time to time the gibbous moon broke through with sufficient strength to light the scene when the heavy foliage did not act as a final bar. The New Yorker stopped his car, and examined the place carefully. As he remembered it, the church must lie in a northerly direction. Since that was so, to the north of him must also be the driveway which had admitted the Breyerton automobile to the position it had occupied in front of the chapel the night of the proposed wedding.

Feeling that his greatest security lay

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Agent's Directory List, Indiana, Pa.

in the unusual hour of his visit, and reassured by the automatic revolver he had slipped into his pocket when Bantock had announced Penfield Breyerton that morning. Westlake now determined to visit the place whence he had rescued the beautiful little model. He throttled down the big car to the lowest possible speed, and hugged the right side of the road. The moon was now veiled by clouds driven before a sharp current of the upper air, but his two searchlights flooded the road ahead of him. The break in the road on the right which he sought soon came into view.

He decided not to turn his machine into the churchyard. Instead, he ran it a few yards north of the driveway, and left it standing beside the road, on a down grade. As he merely wished to make a hasty, superficial examination of the place, knowing that he could not hope to learn much under cover of the night, Westlake left his lamps burning brightly. Walking in the path beside the driveway, he went toward the church.

There was not the slightest sound to be heard. Without reason, Westlake paused frequently to listen. His caution not being rewarded, he walked forward until he stood on the pavement in front of the church. It was here that he had paused long enough to jab his knife into the tire of the Breyerton automobile. Tonight no machine stood in front of the church, no light burned within.

The man walked around to the side of the church, but there was nothing to be seen. He thought he was able to distinguish the window where he had sat and seen Wilbur Breyerton guarding the interior of the church with a revolver and

"What a charming place to meet charming conspirators."

Mrs. Breyerton supporting the head of Abel Harryton in her lap. He made a complete circuit of the church, but as far as learning anything was concerned he might as well have stayed in his automobile. Paths diverged in several directions, but they could tell him nothing in the darkness.

While before the building which might serve as a monument of his meeting with Virginia, Westlake could not help thinking of her. The little excursion to the chapel was prompted by thoughts of her; but now as he stood there watching the moon paint momentary patches of light, he paused to consider seriously what would be his proper move when at last he found her.

That he loved her, he admitted to himself unreservedly. Even supposing that he could regain her confidence, and finally gain her love, would their marriage be for the best? He knew practically nothing of her antecedents. And when that came into his mind it was with no consideration of self. It was of Virginia he thought. Would she be able without training to take the place in society that would rightly be hers as his wife? Would not the burdens be more than she could assume? Would it not be better, after all, for her to be thrown entirely in Karl Keinburg's company, and finally marry him?

These questions Westlake asked himself for Virginia's sake. Then—for his own sake—he answered them, in every case swearing that she was capable of anything through love. He resolved, it had been his resolve all along, to untangle the net that enmeshed her, do what he could for her grandfather who seemed to be financially involved, then win her confidence and finally her love.

After casting one more look around, he started back to his machine. The lights glowed in friendly fashion. They seemed to have something reassuring about them. The churchyard at this hour was a dismal place at best, and Westlake kept his eyes on the cheerful spot of light. Suddenly, as if appearing from nowhere, a man stepped for an instant into the light and then was gone.

Under ordinary circumstances this would occasion no alarm. Tonight it was different. So many unusual things had happened there that Westlake felt a chill hand grip his heart at sight of the strange man in the road. He could have sworn that the man had stepped in front of the light without thinking, then had been suddenly seized with the thought that it might betray him, and had quickly got beyond its rays.

By this time the millionaire had got nearly to the road. He was absolutely certain that no illusion had deceived him. The man had been there, and had gone as quickly as he had come. Just for an instant the moon came from behind the clouds, and he could discern the form of a man climbing over the fence into the churchyard. It was the man who had stood in the light of the lamps. Then the clouds gathered together again, and all was darkness.

Why did he climb the fence, instead of coming down to the driveway? How long had he stood there looking at the car? Who was he? What did he want? These questions surged through Westlake's mind, and for none was there an answer.

Determined to wait until there were some developments, Westlake stepped from the path and drew his revolver. Breathlessly he waited, standing close to the trunk of a giant tree and hoping for the clouds to lift. He wondered if the other man was waiting, too. It would be folly for him to walk boldly down to his machine and attempt to start off if the other meant to do him harm. In the light of his lamps he would be a fair target. On the other hand, if the man were only a farmer boy taking a short cut through the churchyard, by this time he was well over the hill. It would not do, however, to act on that supposition. In the dark every moving object is a foe.

Soon there was the sound of footsteps on the gravel. Some one was walking down the driveway from the church. There seemed to be no attempt at concealment. Westlake grasped his revolver and waited. The man was walking ahead steadily, seemingly unafraid, and never stopping to reconnoiter. Soon he was between Westlake and the stream of light from the automobile lamp. The millionaire watched him closely.

While looking at him thus silhouetted against the light, to his horror he saw another form stealing upon the man in the darkness. Before he could cry out, the man in the driveway had been dealt a terrific blow in the back of the head. At sight of the murderous attack Westlake discharged his revolver, but was afraid to shoot at the man who was stooping over his prostrate victim. The sound of the shot, however, straightened him up instantly, and he dashed down to the road. There he turned south, running as hard as he could.

Westlake, somewhat stout and scant of breath, followed for a rod or so, firing at the fleeing man. Then he recognized the folly of further pursuit, and turned back to render what aid he could to the injured man.

The man still lay, an inert mass, in the driveway. Fearing that whoever made the assault might return and shoot at him under cover of darkness, Westlake believed that the best thing he could do would be to put the man in his car and get out of the danger zone as quickly as possible. By a mighty effort he got the limp body on his back and staggered down to his machine. Then an even greater effort was required to get him into the tonneau. This he managed to do with greater speed than gentleness.

Westlake did not take time to crank the machine. Stooping low, to keep from being a target for bullets, he released the brake and the car began to coast down the hill. Soon he caught the spark, and was off at racing speed. Not until he had gone fully a mile did he stop to see if he could render his passenger any assistance. He knew that he could at least place him in a more comfortable position.

Lighting a match, he saw on the floor of the machine a man in a blue suit with a red cravat. Instantly he remembered the description given him by the Melhurst station agent of the man who had asked about Breyerton Tower. There was no doubt in his mind that the unconscious man in his machine was Detective Pettus.

This strange story leads to very extraordinary situations and dramatic episodes. The reader will find it eminently worth reading to the end. Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of it. The surest way to get the Ledger is to subscribe for it and have it come to your home regularly. Today is a good time to attend to this.

An Early Start.

Mrs. T. awoke with a start, looked at the clock with alarm and bounced out of bed. The reliable old family clock showed that it was 5:10.

"Henry!" she called. "Get up. You've got to get that car at 5:25; it's 5:10."

Henry rolled out of bed, cutting short a leave taking from the delightful realm that lies just between waking and sleeping. He wished vaguely it was Sunday morning and not a work day. Then he began to dress with a full realization that he would have to run two squares before he caught his car.

Just then came a grumble and a series of movements in a little side room, and Mrs. T., busy with breakfast preparations, realized her son Chester was up and about. Surprised at the unusual performance, she glanced into the little bedroom, and the light dawned. Chester had a new "goecycle" built by his father the night before. He was anxious to get into action.

The breakfast was hurriedly eaten, and Mr. T., with his lunch, hastened to the car line. Mrs. T. yawned and told Chester to "goe?cle" to the grocery for a fresh box of cereal for a guest's breakfast.

Twenty minutes later, with a clatter and bang, Chester reached the house again. "Mamma!" he shouted, "there wasn't a single store open—and it's awful dark."

There came a second step on the veranda. The door opened and Mr. T., lunch in hand and watch in the other, came in. Silently he held his chronometer before Mrs. T.'s bewildered eyes. The watch was ticking industriously and it was just 2:15 a. m.

"I waited for a car that didn't come—then looked at my watch," explained Mr. T., with just a trace of sarcasm and weariness.

A Misfortune.

"My pupils don't learn like parrots—they use their common sense," writes a teacher. "Let me tell you a grand instance of this. I was trying to tell my class some mark by which they could remember each of the great poets. I said, over and over again: 'The poet Milton was blind.' The stupidest boy in the class should have remembered that, but he didn't. 'Milton, the poet, was blind,' I repeated. 'Now, before you forget it, what was Milton's great misfortune?'

"'He was a poet!' said the stupidest boy."

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The Hypnotic Bachelor

By Clara Parker

"Can't you—sort of—encourage me?"

WHAT got J. B. Dobson into trouble that windy morning was the impossibility for him ever to believe anything which couldn't actually be weighed or measured.

He had just finished an article on mental suggestion, and thrown down the magazine containing it in violent disgust, when his eyes fell upon the nice profile of Louise Hunter. Louise was a single woman who lived next door to him and did hemstitching and house jackets for her lady friends.

He resented Louise. Some one was always telling him of how worthy she was, and he knew perfectly well it was hoped that he would fall in love with and marry her.

As his eyes fell upon her a dare-devil spirit suddenly swept across him. He was alone and with nothing to do until it was time to go for the morning mail. Why not test that fool article on mental suggestion? He was just as likely to have this power bottled up inside him as any other man. He would try it on this sewing person, and he would be wicked about it, too. He had had her held up to him quite long enough; now he would deliberately assail, in his mind, that tedious virtue of hers. Moving a little nearer to the window, he fastened his eyes upon all of her that he could see, and concentrated his mind upon what he willed that she should do.

It was hard, at first, to concentrate. The wind banged things about so, a door blew shut with a crash that made him jump, and, for a whole moment, he couldn't forget that he hadn't ordered steak for his dinner, but eventually, he had worked himself into a fair sort of trance.

"Louise," he began saying over and over to himself, "Come to me, Louise. Louise, come to me."

It was merely a passing frivolity. A private fling at the theory of hypnotism and the oppressive dignity and virtue of Louise. He fully meant to be ashamed of himself almost immediately. His mind had, in fact, begun again to wander toward the wind and his beefsteak, when Louise lifted her head and looked his way.

It was just a chance, of course, but he felt that he blushed; then his smile of sarcasm faded, and he felt a drop or two of perspiration starting out upon his forehead. The woman had not only turned and looked his way she was absolutely staring! She—she was doing worse! She had dropped her work. She—great heavens—she was getting to her feet! She had felt his power and was coming to him in answer to his call. His forty years of blameless bachelorhood were to be tarnished forever in the next few awful moments.

There was no use now of telling himself that he hadn't believed that his will power was anything abnormal, nor that no amount of money would have tempted him to really upset the moral balance of a virtuous, sewing person. Why, only yesterday his aunt had spoken with a great deal of feeling of this Louise. It seemed that she supported people—sisters or somebody—with this needlework of hers. It was very touching, he understood, and now he, in a moment of diabolical curiosity, had summoned her from the paths of rectitude. He had willed her to enter, in broad daylight, his bachelor quarters.

Any one would know that he had no use for hemstitching or house jackets. The two houses were on the outskirts of town, but there was no hope in that. Some one would be sure to take this time for strolling by.

"Go back, Louise, go back!" he began feverishly saying, but it was no use. He could not concentrate his mind upon the command with any force.

Heavens! She had begun to run! The current must be acting powerfully. Who would suppose that he had been carrying about all these years a mental force equal to a first-rate gasoline engine. It—it was awful! Like being something in a side-show. If it got out he might not feel that he could afford to refuse the offers he would get to exhibit himself. He might get to want to do tricks with cards. He might become one of those men who go about finding pins hidden by the audience. The thought of it made him hot with shame. She was running directly toward the window. Was it possible that she would come clawing up the side of the house in place of entering decently by the door?

He could balk her in that, at any rate, this creature of his will, now bounding toward him like a loving house-dog across the lawn. With a bang he had the window down and the shade drawn, then stood trembling and wondering what was happening to his immortal soul.

She had looked very pretty, this Louise, in her abandon of running, her house jacket flowing recklessly backward and her hair slipping away from most of its pins, and—it had been very hard to shut the window.

"Go back, Louise, go back!" he managed to keep on saying, but his will turned traitor and began sending forth messages of its own.

Would she go back? Oh! how earnestly he now hoped that she would not, and when he heard her feet, slower, but still coming up the back steps, he flung his integrity behind him and rushed to meet her, his face aflame.

Hesitating she stood at the open door, her face eager yet distorted. She could not resist, of course, yet it must be hard. There was only one way in which to relieve her, and, all at once, that way seemed delightful.

"Miss Hunter, Louise!" he exclaimed, rushing toward her, some rather hazy but extremely affectionate plans tumbling through his brain.

"Oh, Mr. Dobson!" she gasped, backing timorously away as he advanced. "Your—your chimney is on fire! It's smoking dreadfully! I tried to make you understand through the window, but you shut it down just as I got there."

For full a moment the stunned man stood and stared at the young woman as she slowly backed herself down the steps. Then:

"I am very glad it is on fire, Miss Hunter," he said, with a positively dangerous smile, "since it gives me an opportunity to meet my nearest neighbor. Can't you—sort of—encourage me, you know, by staying near while I see if I have got to carry out the furniture?"

J. B. Dobson still scorns the idea of mental suggestion, but there is no more enthusiastic believer than he in the merits of his wife Louise.

In the Old Style.

Returning from an Eastern trip one day recently, a local man was recounting his experiences for the edification of other members of his household.

"While in Baltimore," he said, "I tried to find some of father's relations, but I was unable to locate them. Odd, too, because they have an uncommon name."

"What is the name?" inquired Robert, aged 9.

"Hack," replied the parent. "It's an old German name."

"Were they up-to-date people?" asked the boy.

"Up-to-date? Of course they are, as far as I know. Why do you ask that?"

"Oh," replied the youngster, with a grin, "I thought they might have changed their name to Taxicab."

A Good Reason.

A farmer, while loading hay in the field, was attacked by his neighbor's bulldog. The man defended himself with the pitchfork, and sent the dog yelping home. The neighbor rebuked him and asked why he didn't use the blunt end of the fork first.

"I would have," replied the farmer, "if your dog had come at me blunt end first."

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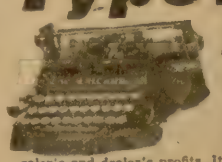

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The Poisoned Pin

(Continued from page five.)

ter of Paris. It had a reputation which was not a savory one, for nocturnal robberies had taken place there, so that few people who could avoid it trod its stones. Into this thoroughfare Vivenne darted and hurried down the pave.

"If such a character as Julie, the singer, lives here, even the little gamins will know," she said to herself. "She will make herself conspicuous, even if she has fallen from her high estate."

She came suddenly upon a street stall presided over by an old woman who leaned back in her chair with her restless little eyes sizing up ever passer-by as a prospective customer.

Vivenne stopped in front of the light. "Bonbons for mademoiselle?" exclaimed the woman, centering her avaricious gaze upon the girl.

"Yes, but good ones mind you, madame. I have a sweet tooth which is very discerning," and Vivenne displayed a well-filled purse.

The bonbons were not of the best, but Vivenne purchased liberally and said:

"Come, madame, tell me about an old friend. You may know her, for she lives on this street."

"Eh, mademoiselle?"

"My charming friend of the Theater Francon."

The bonbon vendor threw up her fat hands in token of amazement.

"Mademoiselle has been sleeping. Mademoiselle Julie is no longer at the Theater Francon."

"But you know her?"

"That I do, and she buys bonbons of me when she has the pay. But it is not always that Julie has the francs."

"She lives in the Rue Moulin?"

"How could she exist elsewhere?" cried the woman. "You go right down the street, this side, mademoiselle, till you come to a house with dark red blinds and a little roof over the front door. The house is a beehive, though one would not find much honey in it. Into the house you go, up the front staircase to the third floor, then to the left, first door, and voila! Mademoiselle Julie!"

Vivenne could hardly wait till the garrulous old woman got through.

"Many thanks, Madame——"

"Voison at your service, little angel," grinned the bonbon seller. "My regards to your dear friend Julie."

It did not take Vivenne long to reach the house with the dark red blinds. There was not another like it in the Rue Moulin. She gripped the old-fashioned brass knob with a firm hand, pushed forward, and the door swung open.

"Third floor, first door from the landing," she muttered as she placed a foot on the lower step of the narrow staircase.

Madame Voison's preciseness stood the girl well in stead, and in a few moments she had reached her destination.

"Who's there?" responded a voice to her knock, and Vivenne, instead of waiting to be invited forward, opened the door herself and entered the apartment that lay beyond.

The room which she entered was small, but neatly furnished. A single bed stood in one corner, a table in the center and three chairs near by. The walls were adorned with portraits of actresses which of themselves told Vivenne that she had not missed her mark. A young woman rose from the couch and was standing in slippers on the bare floor which was very clean. She was devouring Vivenne with a pair of dark brown eyes.

"Who are you?" she suddenly exclaimed. "I don't sing any more. I have retired."

Vivenne could scarcely repress a smile at these words.

"I don't know you, mademoiselle," continued the occupant of the flat. "I may have seen you at the theater, but——"

"I haven't called to talk 'shop,' Mademoiselle Julie," Laurent's love hastened to break in. "You seem to be in other business of late. Maybe it pays better than singing."

Julie shrugged her sharp, bare shoulders.

"You are getting personal, mademoiselle!" she exclaimed.

"And you are again in the journals."

"It is a little passing notoriety," smiled the ex-singer.

"But a dangerous one. Did you tell the truth to Monsieur the Minister of Police when he quizzed you about the episode of the Champs Elysees."

In an instant the countenance of Julie Leclerc underwent a startling change. She took a step forward and glared at Vivenne like a tigress that is about to turn upon its hunter.

"There!" she cried, throwing up her hands. "I talk no more about that."

Vivenne was not to be bluffed. She had not sought out the home of this witness against Laurent to be turned down because her mission was an intrusion.

"You will talk to me!" she said, returning Julie's look with one of fearlessness. "Who paid you to tell your story to Fouche?"

"Not you, mademoiselle," cried Julie.

"Not I, thank Heaven! When the frequenters of the Theater Francon grew tired of your voice you become a paid spy. Who pays you, Mademoiselle Julie, I ask?"

The ex-singer fairly danced about the room. Vivenne watched her till she came back, a little calmer but with a threat in her eyes.

"Who are you?" she cried, leering into Vivenne's face. "You must be Mademoiselle Dubois, his sweetheart?"

Vivenne crimsoned.

"I am Vivenne Dubois," she said, steadily returning Julie's look. "But you haven't answered my question. Who paid you for your testimony against Monsieur St. Denis?"

"Ho, ho! that is it, I see. Who pays me? Why, one who can pay when he wants information."

The words thrilled Laurent's love.

"And I can pay, too," cried Vivenne, taking a well-filled purse from beneath her cloak and casting it upon the table. "There's the value of one thousand francs in that purse. He wasn't that liberal, I am sure."

"He never dines with liberality," laughed Julie, staring at the money bag.

"I thought not. Now, my dear mademoiselle, who paid you to fall in to the hands of Monsieur the Black Adder with your story?"

"I can't betray my friend," cried Julie.

"A friend who hires will betray you," said Vivenne. "You told the truth?"

"I did, mademoiselle. Laurent St. Denis met the woman in the Champs Elysees."

"He admits that," responded Vivenne. "But in whose pay were you?"

Julie's eye wandered once more to the fringed purse.

"I can't, I can't tell you!"

"But you must!" cried Vivenne, and before Julie could stir she felt the hands of Laurent's sweetheart at her throat.

"Tell me! Tell me!" Vivenne went on. "Weren't you coached, hired, and paid by Feroc St. Hillaire?"

The look Vivenne received was answer enough.

"Take the purse, Julie," she said. "You've answered me. I won't betray you, dear girl." And she was gone.

Next week's Ledger will contain the concluding chapters of this interesting story. The surest way to get the Ledger is to subscribe for it and have it come to your home regularly. Today is a good time to attend to this.

* * *

Edith—"Why did she marry him?"
Ethel—"To cure him of drinking."
Edith—"And did she succeed?"
Ethel—"Oh, yes; she's so extravagant he cannot afford it."

* * *

Pat Knew the Answer.

An Irishman was newly employed at a lumber office. The members of the firm were young men and decided to have some fun with the new Irish hand. Patrick was duly left in charge of the office, with instructions to take all orders which might come in during their absence.

Going to a near-by drug store they proceeded to call up the lumber firm's office, and the following conversation ensued:

"Hello! Is this the East Side Lumber Company?"

"Yes, sir. And what would ye be havin'?"

"Take an order, will you?"

"Sure. That's what I'm here for."

"Please send us up a thousand knotholes."

"What's that?"

"One thousand knotholes."

"Well, now, an' isn't that a bloomin' shame? I'm sorry, but we are just out."

"How's that?"

"Just sold them all to the new brewery.'

"To the new brewery? What do they want with them?"

"By golly, an' they use them for bunghholes in barrels."

* * *

A Masculine Idea.

A teacher in one of the primary grades of the public school had noticed a striking platonic friendship that existed between Tommy and little Mary, two of her pupils.

Tommy was a bright enough youngster, but he wasn't disposed to prosecute his studies with much energy, and his teacher said that unless he stirred himself before the end of the year he wouldn't be promoted.

"You must study harder," she told him, "or you won't pass. How would you like to stay back in this class another year and have little Mary go ahead of you?"

"Aw," said Tommy, "I guess there'll be other little Marys."

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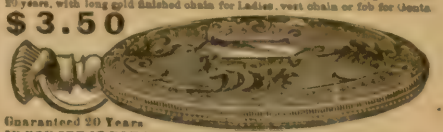

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Does it **Flutter, Palpitate or Skip Beats?** Have you **Shortness of Breath, Tenderness, Numbness or Pain in left side, Dizziness, Fainting Spells, Spots before eyes, Sudden Starting in sleep, Nervousness, Nightmare, Hungry or Weak Spells, Oppressed Feeling in chest, Choking Sensation in throat, Painful to lie on left side, Cold Hands or Feet, Difficult Breathing, Heart Dropsy, Swelling of feet or ankles, or Neuralgia around heart?** If you have one or more of the above symptoms, don't fail to use **Dr. Kinsman's Guaranteed Heart Tablets.** Not a secret medicine. It is said that one person out of every four has a weak heart. Three-fourths of these do not know it, and hundreds wrongfully treat themselves for the **Stomach, Lungs, Kidneys or Nerves.** Don't take any chances when **Dr. Kinsman's Heart Tablets** are within your reach. 1000 endorsements furnished.

A LETTER

or visit to Dr. Rowe, will put you in touch with his latest methods of treating **Nervous and Chronic Diseases.** He is considered to be the most successful specialist in the country in treating those diseases.

Every afflicted man should have his latest book. It accurately describes each disease and contains just the information desired. Postage, 4c. The time is near at hand when **no man afflicted with certain diseases can obtain a marriage license.** Write today.

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Chicago Ledger

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1,200,000

COPIES WEEKLY.

GENTLE JABS.

A tiresome speech is a cheerless affair.

He who hits the pipe must pay the piper.

Uneasy lies the head that wears no hair in fly time.

It's only a matter of time until a white lie becomes dirty.

There's a lot to be seen at the seashore besides the shore.

Some men are honest—just as some women are silent.

The height of a girl's ambition is seldom less than 5 feet 6.

Peanut politicians should not complain if they get well roasted.

There is always a big demand for a thing that cannot be had.

It's not consistent to speak ill of a man if you know him well.

Even light wine has been known to produce a dark brown taste.

Self-control is the one thing a man always has until he needs it.

People who travel at a rapid pace aren't necessarily fast friends.

Some folks are so financially weak they are unable to stand a loan.

Anyway, a married man never has to waste any time in making up his mind.

It is far better to make your mark in the world than it is to be an easy one.

A woman doesn't believe everything a man tells her—unless he is a fortune teller.

Make your words palatable when you can. You may be forced to eat them some day.

The first thing the average hired girl does is look in the closet and size up the family skeleton.

There will always be plenty of hard work to do—and plenty of people who are easy to work.

When a girl begins to call a young man by his first name she probably has designs on his last.

A satisfactory wife tells her husband that she could not possibly have married better than she did.

Give a girl a dollar and she will spend ninety-eight cents of it for a mesh purse to carry the rest of it in.

But the man who masters a hard life is of more importance than the man who is mastered by an easy one.

If girls would choose husbands as carefully as they do their clothes, there would be fewer divorces and more old bachelors in the world.

WANT ADS

Want and Classified Advertising not less than 14 words accepted for insertion in the Ledger and Blade at 30 cents per word for 1,200,000 circulation.

SALESMEN WANTED

WANTED—Hustlers to Take Orders for made-to-measure high grade men's tailored suits from $8.00 to $22.00. Make $25.00 to $50.00 weekly. Elegant large book outfit free. Experience unnecessary. No pocket folder affair. Splendid opportunity to make money. Handy Dandy Line. Dep't E, Sangamon St., Chicago.

AGENTS WANTED

AGENTS Wonderful Opportunity—Act Quick; sell "Ambrew" Concentrated Beer Extract; makes real, genuine, intoxicating beer right at home by adding water. Saves 100 per-cent of brewers prices. Not near beer, not a substitute but real lager beer. Strictly legitimate, no license required. Small package, carry week's supply, deliver as you sell. "Ambrew" is the concentrated ingredients of real lager beer same materials used by all brewers for brewing the best beer. Big seller, enormous demand, large profits. Just send postal, we'll show you how to make money quick. The Ambrew Company, Dept. 1690, Cincinnati, O.

VACUUM Cleaner Agents: Here It Is: Absolutely new design in wheel operated powerful, bellows type vacuum cleaner. New visible nozzle. Exclusive appearance. Sells quick at $7.50. Write for particulars about money back guarantee now. Doty Company, Main St., Dayton, Ohio.

HUNDREDS Make $50-$75 Weekly Selling Guaranteed Hosiery for largest manufacturer in America. Why not you? Complete outfit free. Write quick to our city office. Madison Hosiery Mills, 486 Broadway, New York City.

AGENTS—Big Summer Snap. Every Householder buys. Time Saver during preserving season; gummed fruit label books; waxed; cannot stick together. Hurry. Sample and prices 15 cents. Home Supply Co., Box 4-D, Covington, Ky.

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AGENTS—Salary or Commission. Greatest seller yet. Every user pen and ink buys on sight. 200 to 500 per cent profit. One agent's sales $620 in six days; another $32 in two hours. Monroe Mfg. Co., X 96, La Crosse, Wis.

CANVASSERS, Men or Women. Agents wanted in every community, biggest money making, quickest selling line, household specialties you ever heard of. Write now. S. B. Yale Manufacturing Co., Chicago, Ill.

AGENTS—You Can Make $40 to $75 a Week selling guaranteed aluminum ware to consumers. Complete sales course free. Your territory open. Answer quick. Div. B-L American Aluminum Co., Lemont, Ill.

AGENTS—Our Wonderful Luminous Crucifix; selling better than ever. Some territory still open. Shines all night in darkest room. Write for agency. Pioneer Portrait Company, Department 2, Chicago.

AGENTS Wanted—Big Money Maker. Face-O-Clean for the complexion is a repeat seller. Write quick for free sample and get territory. G. A. Landwehr, Manufacturer, 222 Majestic, Indianapolis, Indiana.

REMNANT Store, Cincinnati, Ohio. Greatest dry goods bargains on earth. Agents and storekeepers supplied.

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FREE Illustrated Book Tells of About 300,000 protected positions in U. S. service. Thousands of vacancies every year. There is a big chance here for you, sure and generous pay, lifetime employment. Just ask for booklet S-1034. No obligation. Earl Hopkins, Washington, D. C.

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BE Detectives—Easy Work, Big Pay; Representatives wanted everywhere. Write Fidelity Secret Service, Wheeling, W. Va.

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AGENTS Make Big Money and Become Sales managers for our goods. Fast office sellers. Fine profits. Particulars and sample free. One Dip Pen Company, Dept. 15, Baltimore, Md.

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A COMFORTABLE Living Earned at Home sewing plain seams; any sewing machine; all home work; no canvassing; Sewers wanted in each town; state time can sew: No trifles; samples, etc., 10c returned if not satisfactory. Home Sewers Company, New York Jobbers, Dept. B. L., Rehoboth, Delaware.

YOU can write a short story. Beginners learn thoroughly under our perfect method. We help those who want to sell their stories. Write for particulars. School of Short-Story Writing, 77 Page Bldg., Chicago.

EARN $7 Per 50 at Home Embroidering Corner of handkerchiefs. Printed lessons free. Easy handwork. Trial lot and instructions 20c coin, sent any distance prepaid. Arabian Supply Co., Dept. 54, Cleveland, O.

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SELF-TAUGHT German, Spanish, French, Italian. Send 35 cents for this wonderful book. Novelty Co., 29 N. Howard St., Akron, Ohio.

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PATENTS That Protect—Patent your ideas; they may bring you wealth; 64 page book free. Fitz Gerald & Co., Dept. W, Washington, D. C.

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TEXAS State Lands—$1.50 to $5.00 Acre, one-fortieth down, balance forty years, information and Texas map free. Journal Pub. Co., Houston, Texas.

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FULL Effect After Few Seconds. Both Sexes. Harmless but powerful. Powder and "secret," 20c. H. Pine, Longbeach, Calif.

PERSONAL

VIRGIN Snow is Not Whiter Than Your Complexion will be after you have used Peach-bloom, the matchless skin bleach and skin food preparation. If your skin is discolored from sunburn, tan, blotches or other causes, write at once for full free particulars and special offer now being made to—Madame La Fonda, Suite 16, Washington, D. C.

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BEAUTY Secrets Given Away. Send Ten cents. Mary More, Box 877, Buffalo, New York.

WIFE Wanted, At Once. A Mulatto Wife Preferred. Wm. Ellis (colored), 317 West 3rd Street, San Angelo, Texas.

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MARRIAGE Paper Free; Best Published for sure results; reliable. Eastern Agency 36, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

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MARRY—Photos, Descriptions and P. O. Addresses of pretty, rich ladies and gents, want to marry, free. H. Jahn, St. Paul, Minn.

GET Married—Best Matrimonial Paper Published. Mailed free. (9) The Correspondent, Toledo, Ohio.

LOVINE Never Fails. Every Package Guaranteed. Either sex, 10c. Two packages sealed 20c. Union, Box 100 N. Palatine, Ill.

MARRY—Best Plan on Earth. Sent Free photo of every lady member. The Pilot, Dept. 674, Marshall, Mich.

MARRY Marriage Directory With Photos and descriptions. Free. Pay when married. New System, Box 525, Kansas City, Mo.

Took No Chances.

"Hello!"

"Yes."

"Is this Mrs. Smith's apartment."

"Yes. Who is this?"

"Mrs. Brown, but you do not know me. I want to beg your pardon for disturbing you, but I wanted to verify a reference given to me by a servant."

"Who is she?"

"She says her name is Mary Jones."

"Oh, yes. I know the girl you mean."

"How long was she in your employ?"

"About six months."

"How did you find her?"

"Very capable girl, I should say. She left me to get a place that paid better."

"Is she a good cook?"

"Splendid."

"How about her laundry work?"

"Excellent."

"Clean?"

"One of the neatest girls I ever had. Her room was just like wax all the time she was here."

"Keep good hours?"

"In bed every night at half-past ten."

"Any bad habits?"

"Well—er—now as to that (decided pause) I don't know just what to say."

"I promise I will treat your information as strictly confidential."

"Well, I thought I detected her making eyes at my husband several times. Mind now, I am not certain about it."

"Was she honest?"

"I'm afraid not. I missed several diamond rings, hatpins and bits of silver while she was here, but she was such a good worker."

"But you never missed any eggs or butter or chops?" came the feverish interruption."

"Never."

"Thank you ever so much. That's all I wanted to make sure of. I think I'll engage her. Good-by!"

Ahead of Him.

Senator LaFollette, apropos of the campaign contributions investigation, said to a Washington correspondent:

"It used to be that the party bribed the voter. Now, it seems the voter bribes the party—and not with a $5 bill or so, but with quarter millions!

"I suppose that vicissitudes like that of the Nola Chucky cat no longer happen to electioneers.

"An electioneer, you know, visited a Nola Chucky man to get his vote. The man himself was out, but his wife said:

"'I can't promise you nothing about Jonathan, sir. He's independent. He'll vote as seems best to himself.'

"The electioneer, after being as agreeable as possible, rose to go. But first he patted a wretched, mangy kitten on the woman's lap.

"'I'm very fond of cats,' he said. 'I shouldn't mind giving you $5 for that one.'

"The woman jumped at the offer. She locked the $5 in a drawer, she put the cat in a basket, and, as she ushered the man out with his purchase on his arm, she said:

"'I'll do the best I can for you about that vote, sir. As I told you before, Jonathan won't be influenced by anybody. The gentleman that's electioneering for your opponent spent a full hour here with me uselessly yesterday, and, by the way, he bought the brother of that kitten of yours for $10.'"

The Time for It.

"If you worship me," sobbed the bride, "why are you so often too busy to say so?"

"Because, my darling," answered her husband, "I worship you in my idel moments."

These suffering from weakness and lack of vigor should take JUVEN PILLS. One box will tell a story of marvelous results. This medicine has more rejuvenating, vitalizing force than has ever before been offered. Sent postpaid only on receipt of this advertisement and $1. Made by its originators, C. I. Hood Co., proprietors Hood's Sarsaparilla, LOWELL, MASS. (2)

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BOGE RUSSELL'S DARING

Or, *Summer Camp Adventures* By William Ressman Andrews

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CHAPTER IV.

BOGE and Delf were model Scouts. They lived up to the Scouts' law: "A Boy Scout is truthful, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent."

Time flew in camp, the life was so pleasant in the luxurious summer vacation period. The boys did everything that one does when camping in the woods near a large body of water. Besides the swimming there was fishing. Part of the time the lads were seen in a dory, one in the bow and the other in the stern, casting lines and drawing in shiny, flapping members of the finny tribe. Sometimes it would be a mess of flounders. Then Boge's patrol had fish for supper, as a change from meat.

"Golly, but this tastes better than most fish," said Boge, one night after a big catch. "There's something about earning your own fish dinner, the way we have today, that makes it seem better."

One afternoon Delf and Boge started off to take pictures of the fishing village, for they had exhausted pretty much all the scenery close to the camp. They had no difficulty in getting permission when the Camp Master heard what they wanted to do. While in the village they had a curious experience which they never got tired of telling their friends as an unusual bit of the vacation trip.

It was a mere hamlet, and the inhabitants' occupation consisted of fishing or renting boats to city people for a day's fling at the lottery of taking home a basket of fish. The housewives showed a deep interest in the boys taking photographic snapshots, and asked many questions about the camp, the lads answering with their accustomed cheerfulness and good nature.

From some of the gossip they learned that a couple of suspicious characters had been seen hovering near the village for a night or two. The good housewives had formed their ideas of the strangers' intentions, and saw that the family dog was tied close to the henhouse door. This was not deemed quite enough by some of the more timid and imaginative ones. With the dog so far removed from the parlor and kitchen doors, what was to prevent a pilferer from carrying away everything—even to the furniture?

While the Scouts were listening to one good woman's fears, a sudden loud noise was heard from the cellar, where her husband had gone a little while before. She shrieked at the top of her voice.

"The burglars have shot John!" the poor woman informed the neighborhood, in agonizing tones. "Oh, won't somebody save him?"

With considerable misgivings as to the bad judgment displayed on the part of the suspicious characters, who would not be likely to operate in broad daylight, the Scouts entered the house on the run, seeking the cellar.

They discovered John. But he was not in the hands of bold, bad burglars, bent on disabling him and robbing the house. John was standing in the middle of the cellar, his gaunt, spare frame erect except for his head, which was inclined so that his eyes could take in to the best advantage an object a few feet away.

"Have the burglars shot you, John?" cried his wife, excitedly. "Oh, young men, save my husband!" She stopped on the threshold and gave her other half an agonizing look. "Oh, they've shot him, and he's standing up dead!"

"I ain't deader than you be," retorted John, in disgust. "Do keep your sense about yer, Mary Anne."

Mary Anne gave a sigh of relief. All unconscious of the ridiculous commotion she had caused by her vivid imagination, she spoke up at once.

"But I heard the pistol shots," she defended vigorously.

"Well, I ain't dead, and don't you try to make out I am," drawled John, an injured look on his face. "My time'll come soon enough, without you trying to say I've gone already."

"You don't take my words the right way," accused Mary Anne, dolefully. "I was anxious about you with all these burglars around the village and the shots I heard fired in here just now."

"Weren't no shots fired," contradicted John, sulkily. "It was that," he explained, pointing to the object on the cellar floor.

Mary Anne and the lads followed his finger with their eyes.

"That ain't no pistol," said the fisherman's wife, skeptically.

"Who said it was?" snapped John, feeling foolish on account of the concern shown for his safety when there was no occasion for it. "That's a can of sour corn. The air in it exploded and sent the kernels kiting all over the place. It went off right behind me, and for a moment I thought I was shot good and proper. But it's all over now and I'd rather be shot with a can of corn than with a gun," he added, laughing.

"Oh, John, I am so glad!" she exclaimed with a hysterical little laugh.

And the boys quietly withdrew, leaving the imaginative wife happy in her discovery of John's safety.

"They ought to have a number of cans like that and set them in the cellar, if they could be made to go off when the fisherman's wife heard real burglars trying to burgle," laughed Boge.

The lads went back to camp, and the circle of listening Scouts gathered around Boge after supper and laughed heartily at his relation of John's adventure with the can of corn.

CHAPTER V.

"Say, Boge?" said Delf, perplexedly, one day, "I saw a black-bearded man hovering around the camp yesterday in a way that set me thinking."

"How so?" asked Boge, interestedly, as they strolled along to a secluded and picturesque pool where the two lads sometimes went for a swim.

"At first I thought he was a lineman come to make some kind of electric repairs," answered Delf. "But he made off in the brush when he saw some one was near."

"Where did this happen?" questioned Boge, curiously.

"Near our swimming hole," returned Delf. "Perhaps there's no reason why he shouldn't go there. It's public property, and he has as much right as anybody to visit it. But it was his actions that called my attention to him. Why should he sneak off as if he were doing something he didn't want to be caught at?"

"Robbing a henroost," said Boge, flippantly. "You didn't see a fowl under his arm?"

"Quit your kidding," protested Delf. "I don't say he's up to anything wrong. You know I'm not of a suspicious nature. I'm just asking you what there might be in it?"

"Nothing that I can see, so far," said Boge. "If I saw him do anything, then I could judge. Well, here we are at our place. Let's see who can get undressed and in the water first."

In a grove of hemlocks was a pool about the size of a city back yard, across its widest part. It was fed with fresh water by a brook at the north, and emptied at the south into a small stream carrying off the waste to the Sound some little distance off. The lads knew that salt water swimming is best, and could make their way with lusty strokes. But they had never learned to swim in fresh water, and this pool seemed to offer them the opportunity.

"No matter how good a fellow is at swimming in the Sound or any other salt water body," declared Boge, in first suggesting the self-imposed aquatic lessons, "we must be prepared against accident when sailing or canoeing on fresh water."

So this was why they came quite regularly to the pool instead of doing all their swimming on the bathing beach just below the camp grounds.

At one end the bank sloped gradually. Here they undressed and entered the water. They splashed around for a few minutes, thoroughly enjoying themselves. Presently Boge tripped over something that from its feel he thought was a vine that had dropped into the water somehow. Yet there were no vines growing in sight. He leaned down to the bottom of the shelving bank and picked up the curious object.

"What do you think of this find?" he inquired. "Here's a piece of electric light wire."

Delf examined it—or, at least what part they could see. They had hold of one end, and the other end was not in sight. The wire was of copper, quite a large size, and had several thicknesses of insulation.

"Wonder what it's here for?" was Delf's curious question.

Boge pulled on it, expecting the wire was a short piece.

"Why, it hasn't been thrown in carelessly," he exclaimed. "Here, I've got a dozen feet out of the water, and there seems to be no end."

"Somebody has dug a trench and placed it here," Delf announced, in surprise, after the two examined the bank close by. "This evidently is meant to be the end of the wire. But how strange to leave it sticking in a pool?"

"Perhaps there's more of it," said Boge, waving his hand toward the opposite bank. "Might have broken by accident at the bottom of the pool. Just the thing for us," he cried, enthusiastically, as a sudden idea came to him. "We'll get practice diving, by trying to find the rest of the wire. We've got so we're able to swim fairly well in fresh water. I dare you to make for the opposite side straight from here."

The other lad was game, and they both started to swim across the pool, going in the direction they supposed would lead them to the spot where the other end, if there were one, of the wire would probably be found. But there were no signs of a wire on this side. As the water was clear they varied the quest by taking porpoise dives here and there. When near the bottom they opened their eyes and glanced around for the elusive object. But nothing to bear out Boge's supposition was found.

"Anyway," he said, complacently, "it's afforded us some amusement. We've had as much fun as if we had been playing a game. But say," he burst out, when they returned to the small patch of sand where they had thrown down the wire, "I'm curious to know where this leads to." Then he grinned. "Perhaps it was laid by your bearded friend."

"He's the only lineman we've seen hereabouts," said Delf. "Still, I won't say he had anything to do with it, till we find out more."

Boge failed to answer at once. He was busy examining the place where the wire was buried. He began digging with his hands. He suddenly stopped.

"Don't know if I'm doing what's right," he objected, a feeling of conscientiousness prompting him to decide whether he was destroying someone else's property just to satisfy a boyish curiosity. "Perhaps it isn't our business to be prying into this thing."

"But look here," urged Delf, directing his attention to a spot back in the trees. "The wire isn't buried all the way; only along the beach."

Boge came up and looked at the spot pointed out by his friend.

"Yes, it runs right on top of the ground from here on, I see," he declared, mildly surprised.

"Say, let's follow and see where it leads to," suggested Delf.

"All right," assented Boge, entering into the spirit of implied exploration. "We'll first get our clothes on. No telling where it will lead us."

"Now we're off," announced Delf, when they had dressed, his imagination picturing all sorts of adventure at the end of a commonplace copper wire. And his friend began to wonder, too, in catching some of the other's enthusiasm, if after all, the wire was going to furnish them something to talk about.

"Great Scott, what's that!" exclaimed Boge, tensely excited, his eyes bulging from their sockets, as he saw blue and green flames shoot up from the water the moment he threw the wire back and it touched the surface. Both lads exchanged glances of amazement. "We got out just in time," cried Boge, awed by what he had seen. "That's a live wire! Had we been bathing till now, we would have been instantly killed."

CHAPTER VI.

The boys sat down on the sand, weak from the shock of their discovery. They were brave lads, but there was something about the peril they had just escaped which made their hearts sink. The hidden dangers of electricity are uncanny. They creep up unawares like robbers in the night, and strike without the faintest warning.

Finally Boge got his breath. "Wasn't it lucky for me that the sun dried the water on the insulation before I picked it up?" he mused, absently. "If it had been wet, I'd have been electrocuted before throwing the wire into the pool."

"Strange the current was not on from the first," speculated Delf, gazing fearfully at the small part of the wire still visible. It looked like a treacherous blacksnake.

"I don't see why the power was on at all," declared Boge, perplexedly, "if it were laid with the idea of splicing another piece on some time later. The job looks as if it were unfinished. Don't see why any one would stick the end of a wire in there like that——"

"Unless they had some good reason," broke in Delf.

"What do you mean?" inquired Boge, eying his friend.

"Because the way it was carefully laid there looks as if some one did it purposely," explained Delf.

"What purpose?" asked Boge.

"All I can think of is experiments," declared Delf. "Perhaps some college professor had the wire put there, intending to work out a problem for his engineering class."

"Well, if that is the case," snorted Boge, indignantly, "he ought to be more careful. What rank disregard for others. He should know the dangers of doing a thing like that."

"Yes, but probably he didn't dream of anybody swimming in a small fresh water pool when so near salt water," said Delf trying to explain away the situation. "But don't think I'm saying this in defense of such conduct. We ought to ferret out the person responsible for this, and see that he promises to be more careful in the future, or see that he's prosecuted for criminal negligence."

"My sentiments exactly," agreed the Scout leader, heartily. "First thing, we'll find out where it leads to. You

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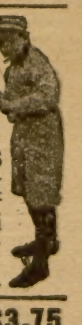

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had better stay here and warn people away. Some one might come along and not be so lucky as we have been."

The next instant he was walking rapidly alongside the wire. There was now no trouble to follow its course. Presently it brought him to a dilapidated wooden causeway, which had in the past been the means of reaching the mainland. Its planks were rotted away in places. Even some of the piling was hardly safe. No one used it now, people always crossing by the newer and safer structure.

The young Scout saw at once that the wire went all the way across. He followed its course, stepping gingerly over the holes. Presently he reached the other side. Here he noticed that the wire trailed along the road in high grass growing between the ditch and a low rambling stone wall. At comparatively short distance was a crossroad. A trolley line ran through this thoroughfare. Reaching the first pole he saw "his wire" had been strung to the top.

"By the great horn spoon," he muttered, puzzled, "but this arrangement is queer!"

The wire, with part of the insulation removed, had been thrown over the main feed of the trolley. No telling how many hundreds of volts had been carried to the swimming pool.

"That is queer," a voice agreed behind him.

"Hello, Frank," greeted Boge, turning to a red-headed man who suddenly appeared from the bushes on the left.

The newcomer was a hanger-on who had appeared about the Scout camp a few days before. He was a happy, good-natured soul, always singing or telling interesting yarns. The boys thought he was a tramp who stayed around to pick up what he could in the way of an occasional meal. The Camp Commissioner had tolerated him as a harmless character whose gay spirits added to the occasion.

The Scout briefly explained his discoveries, and Frank listened with absorbed attention. The next moment his red shock bobbed back and forth as he shinned up the pole. The wire was thrown to the ground.

"What does it all mean?" inquired Boge, when Frank descended. "I'm going to ask Mr. Brown what he thinks about it."

"Great Scott, what's that?"

The red-headed individual looked thoughtfully at Boge.

"Does seem mighty mysterious," he said, slowly. "But don't think I'd say much to anybody."

"Not to Mr. Brown?" asked Boge, in surprise.

"Oh, tell him, if you think best," assented Frank, easily. "But it's too soon to know what it's all about. You say somebody might have been experimenting. Well, perhaps."

"What about this wire?" Boge wanted to know.

"Won't do any harm where it is now," declared Frank.

"But if it is left there what's to prevent its being strung on the pole again?"

"Don't worry about that," smiled Frank, who waved an airy hand and made off down the road.

"He took it coolly," said Delf later, when the two lads started back to camp. "Looks as if he doesn't think it worth while bothering his head about."

They sought the Camp Master. He listened thoughtfully. "You had a narrow escape, boys," he declared. "Don't swim in the pool any more. Come, we'll go back and gather up the wire."

In a few minutes they were at the swimming hole.

"Why, say," exclaimed Boge, after looking around, "the wire isn't here."

"Some one has taken it," Mr. Brown told them presently. "Here are footprints in the sand."

Whoever it was wore a large shoe. They followed the trail to the grassy flat beyond. There the signs ceased. The three then went to the trolley pole to see if that end of the wire was still there. But it had disappeared completely.

On the way back a black-bearded man passed them.

"That's the man I saw the other day," said Delf, after they got out of hearing.

"Something about him that seems familiar," volunteered Boge. "Yet I can't place him. Wonder who he is?"

As neither could offer any satisfactory explanation they dismissed him from their minds.

"I wouldn't say anything about this yet awhile," said the Camp Master, suddenly, when he left them at their tent.

"He's taking it as coolly as our red-headed friend," commented Delf, later.

The next evening the two friends were rambling in the woods some little distance from the camp lines.

"What's that?" Boge suddenly cried out, as something whizzed close to his ear. "Bees don't fly about at night."

Delf thought a bat flapped his wings near his companion's head. This explanation seemed to suffice, and they continued their way back. They passed a large tree. The same sound was heard again. Boge fell to the ground. He had tripped over a root. The fall stunned him slightly. As he rose the peculiar noise was heard again, followed by the clipping of the bark two feet above his head. The bushes behind them rustled, and the silent quick padding of muffled feet was borne on the wind.

"Some freshie trying to scare us," explained Delf. "by throwing pebbles. Wonder which one of the boys did it?"

But the next day none of the faces they scrutinized showed any guilty knowledge.

In the afternoon, while the boys were developing photographic plates, a scratching sound was heard on the tent-flap. The visitor was called inside.

"What is it, Tad?" asked Boge of a bright-eyed little chap with a pleasant smile. It was the policeman's son, whom they had sought on their arrival.

"See what I found down near the place you were last night," he announced, holding out a round, hollow piece of metal about six inches long.

The older Scouts examined it for a few seconds. Delf could not make head or tail of it.

"What is it?" he asked, impatiently.

"I have it," finally exclaimed Boge, jumping to his feet. "I know from pictures in the Scientific American. It's a Maxim silencer. Some one has been shooting at us. Guess the Camp Master will be interested in this."

And he was. He gravely questioned the boys, but ventured no opinion.

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A Trying Task.

Putting up a stove is not difficult in itself. It is the pipe that raises four-fifths of the mischief and all the dust. You may take down a stove with all the care in the world, and yet that pipe won't come together again as it was before. You find this out when you are standing on a chair with your arms full of pipe, and your mouth full of soot.

Your wife is standing on the floor in a position that enables her to see you, the pipe, and the chair, and here she gives utterance to those remarks that are calculated to hasten a man to the extremes of insanity. Her dress is pinned up over her waist and her hands rest on her hips. She has got one of your hats on her head, and your linen coat on her back, and a pair of rubbers on her feet. There is about five cents' worth of pot-black on her nose and a lot of flour on her chin, and altogether she is a spectacle that would inspire a dead man with distrust.

While you are up there trying to circumvent the awful contrariness of the pipe, and telling that you know some fool has been mixing it, she stands safely on the floor and bombards you with such domestic mottoes as, "What's the use of swearing so?" "You know no one has touched that pipe." "You ain't got any more patience than a child." "Do be careful of that chair." And then she goes off, and reappears with an armful more of pipe, and before you are aware of it she has got that pipe so horribly mixed up that it does seem no two pieces are alike.

You join the ends and work them to and fro, and to and fro again, and then you take them apart and look at them. Then you spread one out and jam the other together, and mount them once more. But it is no go. You begin to think the pieces are inspired with life, and ache to kick them through the window. But she doesn't lose her patience. She goes around with that awfully exasperating rigging on, with a length of pipe under each arm and a long-handled broom in her hand, and says she don't see how it is some people never have any trouble putting up a stove.

Then you miss the hammer. You don't see it anywhere. You stare into the pipe, along the mantel, and down on the stove, and off to the floor. Your wife watches you, and is finally thoughtful enough to inquire what you are looking after, and, on learning, pulls the article from her pocket. Then you feel as if you could go outdoors and swear a hole twelve feet square through a block of brick buildings; but the chair tilts forward enough to discharge your feet, and you come down on the wrong end of the chair, with a force that would bankrupt a pile driver. You don't touch that stove again. You leave your wife examining the chair, and bemoaning its injuries; and go into the kitchen, and wash your skinned and bleeding hands with yellow soap. Then you go down the street after a man to do the business.

Presence of Mind.

An experienced American traveler was speaking of the agitation against smoking in public conveyances. He said:

"I was journeying first class in England once, and the other passengers in the compartment were a compatriot of mine and a Britisher. My fellow American lighted a cigar, and the Briton loudly protested, and finally called the guard. But the Yankee spoke first, and said:

"'Guard, I think that you will find this man is traveling first class on a third-class ticket.'

"So it proved, and the Britisher was ejected. I asked my Yankee friend how he knew.

"'Well,' said he, 'my ticket is third-class, too, and I saw that fellow's sticking out of his pocket, and noticed it was the same color as mine.'"

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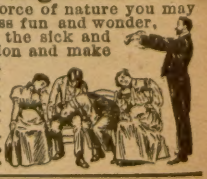

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Superfluous Hair Remover Free! Banish that mannish appearance! "SEE-HAIR-GO," an Indian discovery, positively removes any hair growth instantly! Even toughest, most wiry hair imaginable. Unlike any other preparation. Germicidal; antiseptic; won't injure or irritate tenderest skin. Results guaranteed. Delicately perfumed; pleasant to use. Free trial bottle (plain wrapper) to prove its merit. SEND 2c POSTAGE.
Mary Louise Wright, Dept. T 7 504 E. 47th St., Chicago, Ill.

ASTHMA Prompt Relief. Remedy Guaranteed. Trial mailed free. Dr. Kinsman, Box 768, Augusta, Me.

The LEDGER'S EMBROIDERY CORNER.

ANNOUNCEMENT TO OUR READERS.

We have just arranged with one of the leading houses of the East to furnish our readers with all of the latest and newest embroidery articles on the market.

These designs are not the ordinary paper patterns from which you must trace your designs on cloth, making the work both tiresome and expensive, but are already stamped on best quality cloth, and every set comes to you complete with thread, needles, etc.

Every one of the designs we are going to offer is new and up-to-date, and nowhere else can you secure the same, as they are made exclusively for us.

You are sure to find many articles that you want if you watch the Ledger each week, and it is so easy to get them, every woman should have little trouble in getting almost every one.

No. 1, Children's Stencil Outfit.

NO. 1, CHILDREN'S STENCIL OUTFIT.—This outfit consists of eight designs stamped on linon and one tinted to show how the work is done; 6 cups of water colors; 1 stencil brush, and directions on back of cups.

This outfit can be used for various purposes, and a child is sure to be delighted with one.

Sent complete to any one sending us $1.00 for a year's subscription (new or renewal) to The Saturday Blade or the Chicago Ledger.

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No. 8, Child's Set.

NO. 8, CHILD'S SET—The set we illustrate above and which we are offering our readers is one that should and will please every mother. A complete set for baby, consisting of cape, cap, bib, belt, and a pair of bootees, all stamped on finest quality rep for punch work and French embroidery.

Set as described sent free to any one who will send us $1.00 for a year's subscription (new or renewal) to either the Blade or the Ledger.

—

SOFA PILLOWS, NOS. 7A, 7B, 7C—A set of three hand-painted sofa pillows, all handsomely tinted in colors on Aberdeen crash, size 17x22 inches, including back of ticking and five skeins of colored mercerized luster for working.

Any one of these beautiful pillows sent free to any one who will send us $1.00 for a year's subscription (new or renewal) to either the Blade or the Ledger.

—

No. 9, Set for Child's Frock.

NO. 9, SET FOR CHILD'S FROCK—A very dainty set for the little one, consisting of long collar, cuffs, and belt, all to match, stamped on best quality pique, with eight skeins of blue D. M. C. cotton for working.

Sent free to any one sending us $1.00 for a year's subscription (new or renewal) to either the Blade or the Ledger.

—

NO. 4, READY-MADE LAUNDRY BAG, SIZE 12X20 INCHES.—This laundry bag is ready-made on tan drill bound with red tape, with two brass eyelets on which to hang same. Also five skeins of red cotton for working.

Nos. 7A, 7B, 7C, Sofa Pillows.
No. 7A, at Top; No. 7B at Left; No. 7C, at Right.

No. 4, Ready-Made Laundry Bag.

Sent complete to any one sending us $1.00 for a year's subscription (new or renewal) to the Blade or the Ledger.

Settling the Matter.

Joe was down in his luck—lower than he had been for a long time. That is why he decided to turn his hand to crime. He had never dabbled in crime before, but, being lonely now, out of work and hungry, with one old pistol in his possession, he could see no alternative.

So one evening, happening to meet an old gentleman in a deserted road, he bravely leveled the aforementioned pistol at his head, demanding with traditional fierceness, his money or his life.

"Come," said the old gent, "we can settle this matter better than that. How much do you want for that pistol?"

"Ten pounds," came the answer.

Without a murmur the old gentleman forked out two notes and in a moment the sale was completed. But, just as Joe was preparing to move on with the money the purchaser turned on him.

"That money back," he demanded, "or I'll blow your brains out!"

"Blow away," said Joe, sweetly, as he began to walk away. "The pistol isn't loaded."

The man who insists on having his own way at all times is apt to interfere with the progress of others, and, in so doing, step on his own toes.

PATTERN COUPONS FREE!

Hundreds of Patterns to Select From

The great difficulty in making one's own garments is to get suitable patterns. Our women readers could make many pretty and useful things for themselves and their children if they could get well-made patterns. We have arranged to give our readers a pattern service unexcelled.

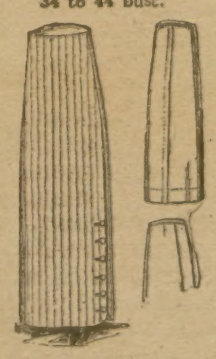
We make a splendid offer of the best and most fashionable patterns that can be produced by the greatest designers of New York and Paris, and, what is more, these patterns will be within the reach of every one, and every one will have a wide selection to choose from. Read our splendid Offer below.

7911 Loose Coat, 34 to 44 bust.

7903 Boy's Sailor Suit, 4 to 10 years.

7898 Girl's Dress, 10 to 14 years.

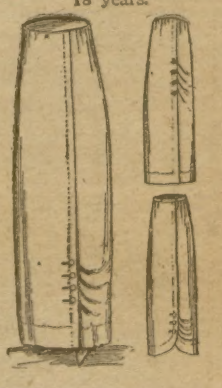
7907 Semi-Princesse Dress for Misses and Small Women, 16 and 18 years.



7902 Three-Piece Skirt, 22 to 34 waist.

7923 Fancy Tucked Blouse, 34 to 42 bust.

7899 Fancy Blouse, 34 to 40 bust.



7916 Two-Piece Draped Skirt, 22 to 32 waist.

HOW TO GET THE FREE PATTERNS

Here is the way we will do it. To every one who will send us one dollar for a year's subscription to The Chicago Ledger we will send absolutely free five pattern coupons. Each coupon will be good for one pattern and you can select the patterns from those illustrated in any issue of The Chicago Ledger. When you see a pattern that you like all you have to do is to send us a coupon and it will be sent to you at once. In this way you will have hundreds of patterns from which to pick the five that you will be entitled to, and you have all the time you need to pick out the ones you want.

These patterns are the best that can be made. Each pattern gives full directions for the cutting and making with information as to the amount of cloth required, etc., so that any one can make any of the designs illustrated with no trouble at all. At the same time, they are so stylish and accurately cut that dressmakers and seamstresses all over the country will be quick to take advantage of this liberal offer. Some will subscribe for two years so they can get ten coupons. These designs are made by the best designers and modists of New York and Paris, and are up-to-the-minute in fashion and beauty.

We treat old and new customers alike on this splendid offer. If you are already a subscriber, send in a dollar and we will send you the five pattern coupons and extend your subscription one year from the time it now expires.

To get these five coupons entitling you to five patterns, fill out the blank below and enclose it with one dollar for a year's subscription to The Chicago Ledger. Do this now—today! No woman should be without the Ledger's Pattern Coupon Book. Be among the thousands of women who will get these coupons.

..... CUT THIS OUT AND SEND TO US .....

THE CHICAGO LEDGER, 500 Dearborn Avenue, Chicago, Ill.

Enclosed please find one dollar for a year's subscription to The Chicago Ledger. This entitles me to Five Pattern Coupons. Canada Subscription Price $1.50 per year.

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If you wish any pattern from those advertised in this issue, mark the number and size on the margin and we will retain a coupon for each pattern we send you when we send you the Coupon Book. (Order by size and number). GOOD FOR ANY TIME.

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Listen men! It doesn't make a bit of difference what business you are in—what kind of a job you have—what other line or lines you are handling—or how much money you are making—**you simply can't afford to pass up this offer!** You never before heard of any chance to equal this—never before such an opportunity to make so much money, so easy. Think of it! $60, or even more, a week with hardly an effort. Don't you think that's pretty good pay for just a little of your energy and ethusiasm? Of course, you want to know how to do it. Everybody likes to make big money easy. Well, we'll show you how—just drop us a postal. We need you if you're a live active man—there's room for you in our great family of prosperous agents. We'll give you exclusive territory and equip you complete with one of our

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The most dazzling sample display ever gotten out—stupendous in size—magnificent in beauty. The famous "Book of Gold"—Masterpiece Edition—shows 96 snappy up-to-date styles and 220 wonderful patterns, all different, all distinctive. A penny postal brings this gorgeous outfit to you **absolutely free,** and starts you on the road to wealth and prosperity. You can't afford to miss the Golden dollars that this one penny will bring you. No red tape—no references—no delay. Everything sent at once **express prepaid,** upon receipt of your postal. Then to start you out right and help you get orders we make you a

Swell Suit and Overcoat Free

We want you to be the big style setter, the swellest dresser in town. We know that will bring the business to you easy, because everybody that sees your classy appearance will want the same kind of swell clothes. They're bound to order from you. Competition is knocked silly by your gorgeous sample display and low prices. Your friends can only get such wonderful values from **you** and they realize it quick. You save them a bunch of money on every suit or overcoat they buy.

These Illustrations Show But 4 of the 96 Swell Styles In The "Book of Gold"

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Be careful, Men! Don't be gulled by "guarantees" that are smoothly **worded** but won't **work.** You want **protection,** not **promises!** The woods are full of guarantees that **say** something but don't **satisfy** when it comes to a **show-down.** Anybody can hand you a Webster's dictionary—it's full of **words** that are free to all—but don't be honeyfugled by **"hot air."**

What you want is **"cold facts!"** When you sell a man a suit you want to be dead sure—**every time**—that **satisfaction** goes with it. You can't afford to represent a concern that will not give you a **real guarantee.** Now, please **listen**—let these words sink deep: We guarantee to refund purchase price on return to us of any garment, if after examination it fails to give **absolute satisfaction.** And furthermore: We guarantee that each and every Suit, Coat, Pair of Pants, Vest and Overcoat, shipped by us is **tailor-made** specially to order from measurements sent us in **each individual case.** We positively do not handle any ready-made garments whatever.

We stand back of our work with a $5,000 **cash guarantee bond.** We stand between you and your customers. We give you **real**—not sham—protection. Don't make a mistake! Get the **"guarantee that guarantees"**—the Satisfaction Bond backed by 5,000 Dollars—from the **"House of Golden Opportunities."**

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96 Styles

No Money or Experience Needed

You don't need a dollar of capital—we supply everything—elegant outfit—snappy, practical selling helps, valuable presents for you to give to your customers—**everything absolutely free.** We make it so easy for you to get orders that experience is positively not necessary. We simply want you to be one of our prosperous swell dressed agents. Make $60 a week or more and live on the fat of the land. You can do it—thousands of our live representatives make $10 to $15 a day without any trouble. Show us that you're alive and willing to be "shown." Write us a postal today and get started—**everything you need free.**

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Don't neglect this wonderful chance—don't hesitate or delay—you can't afford to lose time because it means money to you. Simply send your name and address on a postal or in the coupon to the right and mail it now—right away—while it's in your mind. Act quick—only one agent in a territory—**Write Now!**

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